



ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND

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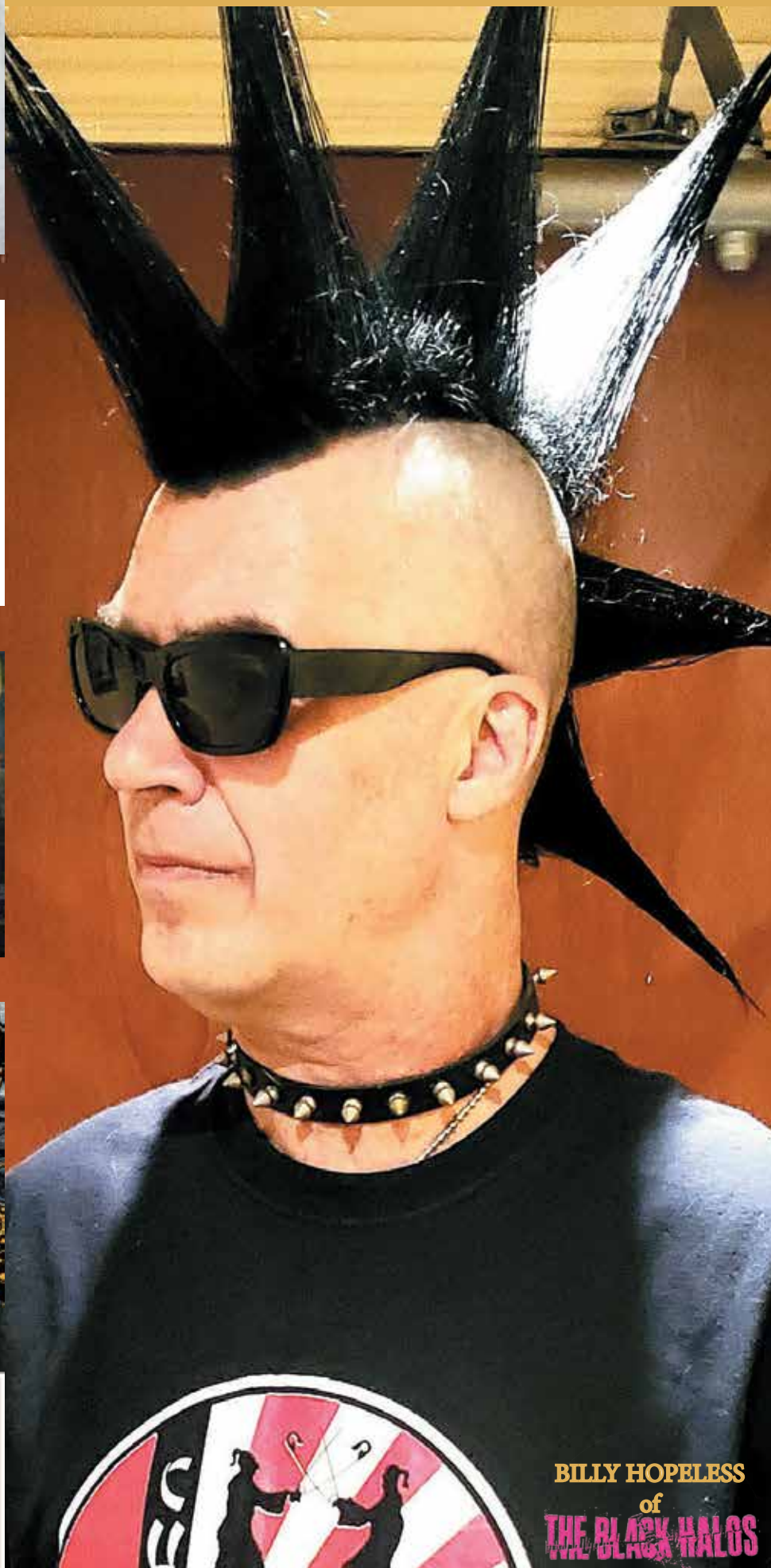
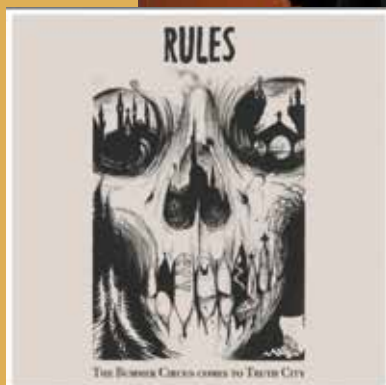
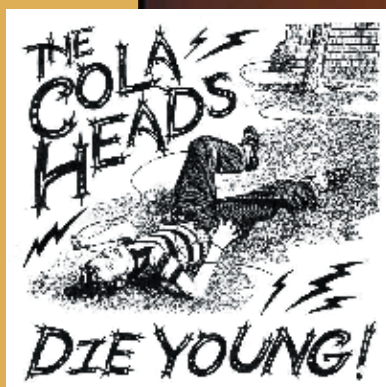
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AU EDITORIAL – ...from humble beginnings... message at #100

We made it. Issue #100. Thank you for reading, contributing, and participating.

It's been a group effort: writers and photographers getting stories, late night typing, laying out the magazine, editing the videos, running the live shows, distributing issues across Canada... readers picking it up and taking a chance on a new band - we all had a role to play to make it go. It's only as strong as the efforts we all put in... otherwise its a dead, blank page. It's been a privilege to provide a platform for the scene to SPEAK and be heard; to provide a space for the underground to communicate, for free, without censorship – the message as they spoke it.

People have come and gone. Some are no longer with us – rest in peace. Bands broke up and also formed. Venues closed, labels upcoming, businesses created, fellow magazines out of print. COVID-19 couldn't take us out. The scene has changed since the inception of the magazine. Somehow it speaks to the ongoing value of print, in the digital age. It has been an honour to record and promote, to create a record of where culture is at the time. We are still here, promoting independent music and culture. We are in your corner!

Keep reading, keep rocking, the scene is only as strong as how you support it. We put it to you: keep supporting and creating. Keep taking chances on new projects and music. See you in the pit!

- AU CREW



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Wet Cigarette

Band Members:

Adam - Guitar, Vocals

Anthony - Bass, Vocals

Amanda - Guitar, Vocals

Evan - Vocals, Bass, Guitar

Alex - Drums

Interview by John Carlow

AU: Tell us about the band name.

Evan: I came up with the name in the sweet summer of 16. I'd been getting more into punk music at the time and had been wanting to make a band. I accidentally dropped my cigarette into the water and watched it float away. I said, "Wet Cigarette" and loved how it felt to say.

AU: Describe your music.

Amanda: Evan's unfiltered thoughts, Adam and Tony's sweet licks, kitchen jams that stick, and dumpster fire versions of all my favorite pop punk bands mashed into songs. Everything we write is about random life tidbits, like Ramen. Ramen deserves a song.

AU: When did you start out?

Tony: November 2018. Evan and I both expressed interest in starting a shitty punk band to a mutual friend. We jammed in that friend's bedroom while he was out. I was on bass, Evan on vocals, and we wrote the band's first song that night, "Everything Sucks". I called Adam on the phone and we played the song live for him. I asked, "want to play guitar in this band?" Adam was all over it, so we had a lead guitarist. Evan met Amanda on a surf trip in Tofino. There was an acoustic guitar at the hostel where they were staying. Both played it and after noticing her FIDLAR shirt, asked if she wanted to join the band. Boom, we had rhythm guitar. Evan knew Alex from university, and he agreed to play drums for the group.

AU: Tell us about your first album Uncut.

Tony: *Uncut* is a conglomeration of the creative process of everyone in the band. I did the engineering, mixing, and mastering. Evan made the album cover, and we all handled all the promotion and distribution. "Uncut" is a reference to the fact that no one in the band is circumcised. It's hilarious cause most people think that we are referencing that the album is unedited or raw but it's really about uncut dongs.

Amanda: *Uncut* is an immortalization of the most fun I think most of us have ever had. Creative

juices flowing, songs materializing in minutes, previously unstable creativity becoming an album that people liked.

AU: Tell us about the new record.

Tony: We're currently doing scratches/demos for our next full length, with a working title of "God Awful Music". The title came from Evan's shitty, grouchy old neighbors who used to freak out when we'd practice in his garage. The neighbors just screamed at us, telling us that "no one in the neighborhood wants to hear your god-awful music". My personal vote was to defecate on their front lawn, but since I'm not GG Allin, that hasn't happened. We're going to change things up and use external engineers to record, mix, and master this album. We're tracking guitars for the demos now and hoping to start recording properly in the next few months, provided it's safe.

AU: What are your songs about?

Amanda: Evan's are genius ramblings about the truth of human nature, Tony's are beautiful pieces that are about very-slightly-annoying things that are way funnier when blown up in a song, and mine are about either about roid monkeys, a bitch named Ashley, or the fall of mankind and how Kurt Cobain was right. So basically, about being unstable in your early 20s with too much attention. *God Awful Music* is really gonna piss off people with sticks up their asses. The songs on this album include one where the chords and lyrics were decided by the crowd at a house. Another calls out anti-vaxxers (kind that don't get their kids tetanus/ measles shots), an issue very dear to me as a microbiologist. The song I wrote is just me complaining about how much I hate gym bros.

AU: Memorable past gigs?

Amanda: Evan crowd-surfed at the bar he and I both worked at (Felicia's) at one of our early gigs, and after a few more shows there that bar banned us from playing because they "couldn't control the crowd". (but later unbanned us.)

Evan: Our first show was in the kitchen of the

VICTORIAS LOCALS ONLY

house I was renting. Called *Heat Stroke in The Kitchen* because it was in a quiet neighborhood. We had to keep all the windows and doors closed. When the show was over, I'll never forget watching the steam pour out of the house. My favorite memory from that night was during the break down we do in "Everything Sucks". I'd rented a strobe light, so as soon as the chaos started, we hit the light and I ripped off my shirt exposing all these weird symbols we'd Sharpie marked on my body.

AU: Since lockdowns began?

Amanda: We recorded and released an album, 2 music videos, and wrote 2 new, unperformed songs. Recently the jamming has slowed due to the nature of things, but we still hang out outside and generate big ideas and reminisce about good times. We are not giving up, are recording the next album and are ready to spread as many germs as possible with the first mosh pit the next restriction-free show.

AU: Last thoughts?

Amanda: If I could tell my 13 year old self in 2010 about Wet Cigarette, I would have been stoked that university really would turn out like the movies, and impatiently wait for 2018 when I would meet Evan at that Tofino hostel. That is how unreal this whole experience has been. I have fulfilled all my far-fetched childhood dreams of young adulthood, that were all based on movies I watched about American colleges. The shows were that fun, the friends and parties that fun, and the creativity that fun.

Evan: Can't wait for the first shows post covid. Everyone's ears are going to be so untrained to live music. Everything is going to sound amazing and mosh pits are going to be a god send. I always go to punk shows to express myself and get energy out. I bet everyone's forgotten how to drink at a bar, so we'll all feel 19 again.

<https://w3tcigarette.bandcamp.com>

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AUSTRINGER

*Interview with Tyler Hell - Lead Vocals
by Mal Content*

AU: Who are we talking to and what are most infamous for?

Hey! This is Tyler Hell from Austringer.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who you are, and what are you all about?

After a disastrous set at the Rickshaw, Chris and I decided that we needed to start a band of our own. Threw a house party, and managed to recruit Kavan and Adam. Started gigging January 2016. With equal parts tongue in cheek thrash lyrics and poignant points made to bring awareness to safe supply, mental health issues, homelessness and the ugliness of society as a whole, Austringer is dedicated to playing loud, heavy, and for a good cause.

AU: Describe Austringers sound for those that haven't heard you yet.



orders and having a member living just on the other side of the border, but we have managed to make it work enough to release an album and, with the addition of our second guitar player Zak, start writing new music. It's been a productive apocalypse.

AU: Anything else on the horizon?

Now that our band is vaccinated and jamming again at full speed we already have our next album in the works. Since our newest member Zak joined us as lead guitar after we recorded this one we can't wait to add his shredding to the mix.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

One of us is a wizard. No we can't tell you who.

AU: How can people get their hands on the new album?

If you're looking for our vinyl in Vancouver head over to Red Cat Records or Neptoon Records and grab a copy or contact the band for possible delivery. For digital you can grab it on our Bandcamp. For both just contact us after buying a vinyl for your free download code.

AU: How do people find you online?

You can find us streaming on Spotify, Apple music, Deezer, Napster, and several other streaming sites. For your more than streaming needs catch us on Facebook, Bandcamp, and Instagram.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Drink beer, hail Satan!

**Austringer666.
bandcamp.com**



Our influences range from DRI to Black Breath and most places in between, we try to keep it interesting.

AU: You just released an album correct? Tell us about it and what can we expect to hear?

Yeah, we sure did. It's called *Mind Like a Cesspool*. We were lucky enough to have Cecil English (Nomeansno, DOA, SNFU) record and produce our album so expect to hear gritty vocals, dialed in guitars, and songs perfect for drinking to.

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

We tried to touch on the things that matter most to us: partying hard and social issues.

AU: Any stand out tracks on the album you can go into more detail about?

The closest thing we have to a single would be *Thrown Under The Bus*, which is a catchy little tune about homelessness. Another track sure to get stuck in your head with its story of satanic ritual is *Drink Beer, Hail Satan*.

AU: What is the meaning of the bands name?

Austringer is an old German word for a Falconer that specifically uses hawks or eagles as their bird of choice. So seeing as our bass player, Corporal Ninny, just so happens to be a falconer who uses a hawk and spent time growing up as a base brat in Germany it just felt right.

AU: How has the band been surviving the apocalypse?

It's been an interesting one between health

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE



OSYRON

interview by Jon Asher

AU: Hey Osyron, it's great to have you guys back in Absolute Underground, it's been a year since we last spoke to you for your last album "Foundations" and just recently this past May you released the Deluxe Edition of your 2017 full-length *Kingsbane*.

We understand the album was done in-house by the band with re-mixing done by bassist Tyler Corbett and re-mastering by drummer Cody Anstey. How was it self-producing the record and planning everything for this re-issue during covid times?

Indeed it was! Luckily over 70% of the record was recorded back in 2017 for the original release - so we only needed to coordinate Covid-19 safe tracking locations for the re-recorded versions of *Razor's Wind*, *Griefmaker*, and *Viper Queen*. The mixing and mastering process was then carried out in Tyler and Cody's home studios. Basically all mix/master adjustment notes and final decisions were made via group chats and Skype calls. It was definitely a different experience than we're used

to, but we managed to make it work. Between the five of us, we have quite a broad range of useful skills available - which ended up being a huge advantage, and a big influence on our decision to take on such a huge project in the middle of a global pandemic.

AU: What did the band find was a necessity to re-do on *Kingsbane* and important to share with fans?

First off, we didn't take on this project because we aren't proud of the original version of *Kingsbane* - it's quite the opposite! We felt that the way we released the album in 2017 didn't do justice to the countless hours/days / months of work that was put into its creation. Since the pandemic killed any dreams of playing shows or touring on the *Foundations* album release, we thought it would be really cool to use our time to breathe new life into *Kingsbane*; both for our fans, and for ourselves.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are personally proud of?

We would really like to bring attention to the three bonus tracks: *Razor's Wind* (Acoustic), *Griefmaker* (Re-recorded), and *Viper Queen* (Re-recorded). Not to take away from the original arrangements of those songs, we just feel these three bonus tracks show a more accurate representation of what Osyron has evolved into since *Kingsbane's* initial 2017 release.

AU: We enjoyed your two music videos *Viper Queen* and *Griefmaker* that were redone tracks on the album. How was it putting those together creatively, and were there any hurdles caused by covid getting them done and out?

Thank you! The creative side of the *Viper Queen* video was easy - we had always imagined the video for this song including something to do with a venomous serpent queen. The tricky part was finding a Covid-19 safe location and an actress who was willing to be involved. We're pretty sure, Reed, who handled most of the planning for the *Viper Queen* shoot, grew at least a handful of grey hairs in the process... It all worked out in the end though, and we are eternally grateful to everyone who helped make it happen.

The *Griefmaker* video, being an animated lyric video in style, was a much smoother process from start to finish. Since there was no need to get anyone together physically, it was just a matter of talking back and forth with the animator.

AU: What are the next plans for Osyron, you have three albums out including this re-issue? Is there a new album in the works for next year? and if so, will it follow a theme or story like previous releases?

CALGARY CARNAGE

We are currently in the midst of writing a new full-length album (fifth release, fourth full length including *Kingsbane Deluxe*). As far as themes go, we don't have anything to share just yet, but can assure you, we are very excited about the direction of the new tunes. What we can say, is that we are very particular about what we release into the world, and won't settle on anything short of a momentous leap forward in our abilities as musicians/songwriters.

AU: Will the band be touring post covid times? And if so where should fans keep an eye out for you to hit?

We definitely intend on hitting the road and playing as many shows as we can once the state of the world will allow it! We miss performing and interacting with people. We would love to go everywhere if we can, but there are no plans as of yet because we don't know what will happen with this covid situation. So, it is hard to say.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

Follow us on socials! (@osyronband on Instagram, @osyron everywhere else) We are building up our presence - mostly on Instagram and Facebook - in the meantime since there are no shows to go perform. We are keeping our followers up to date on new material, and there are all sorts of memes and other fun things too! Also, check out our Bandcamp (<https://osyron.bandcamp.com>) Where we have all of our releases in both digital and physical, as well as a bunch of merch (down to and including underwear,) if you'd like to support us directly!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

If you're still here reading this, cheers! We cannot wait to get back out there and see you all out on the road someday soon!

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Maitreya

Interview with guitarist Mark Wylie, bassist Lyam Morrison, and vocalist Matt Cutrara

AU: How did Maitreya come to be?

Mark Wylie: Maitreya started out as an instrumental project, originally called *Cadences*, as founding members Mark Wylie, Matt McCabe, Lyam Morrison and Steve McMillan were finishing high school together. After a hiatus, the band reformed with the addition of vocalist Matt Cutrara. Matt McCabe and Steve McMillan met Matt Cutrara at a chance encounter because of a band t-shirt. The metal band t-shirt sparked a conversation and the rest as they say is history.

AU: Maitreya is progressive metalcore with lyrical influences inspired by many TV shows and movies. What drew you to these topics?

MW: I think the cinematic experience is so emotionally rich and the storytelling takes you on a journey, for me those are two key pillars of songwriting - emotional depth and evocative adventure-esque compositions. Shows like *Westworld* & *Black Mirror* have augmented social commentaries on where humanity and technology intersect and integrate - we all enjoy ruminating and philosophizing on these futuristic,

Yoda or some powerful Jedi from Star Wars. I like to entertain the idea of where superhuman abilities intersect in the world of music. Part of me is convinced 'The Force' is real in various ways, and in music, there's a way of wielding that force whether in a rhythmic capacity, in an intuitive melodic ability or a sort of alchemical harmonic equation.

Matt Cutrara: Tuvok from Star Trek Voyager, playing the lute.

There's always been something really attractive about cold calculating logic while also being creative and soulful at the same time. The idea that logic still has soul, is attractive to me

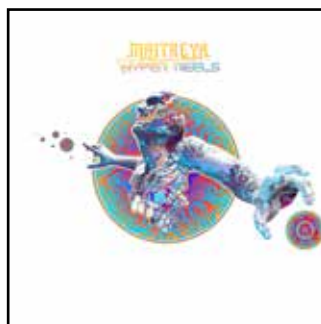
Lyam Morrison: I would definitely want to be a hobbit, carefree life, great weather, great food and they get to live in such a fantastic world but aren't bothered much about the goings-on of evil. I'd imagine I'd play some sort of flute or pipe.

AU: With your music videos for *Summit* and *Pilgrim*, how do you find it as an independent band to put together quality video content for

sci-fi ideas so it was a natural exploration to write a collection of pieces under the hyper-reality conceptual umbrella.

AU: If a genie gave you a wish to be one TV or movie character who would it be and why? And what instrument would they play?

MW: I would probably choose



current fans and to attract new ones?

MW: When we decided to stretch out the album cycle across 5 singles, it opened up the opportunity to explore music videos as an extension/realization of the song concepts in the visual medium. We've been blessed to have an incredible video editor (Heart @ Oceans on Fire Studios) as part of the team to make these videos possible. As the process has gone on, we've pushed our boundaries from traditional performance style videos towards more narrative, scripted type videos to expound the story element of the songs for audiences to experience our visual interpretations of the music.

AU: Your new album *Hyper Reels* is out on June 25th, we noticed you began releasing singles in January, month by month. How important do you find it to release music in this way to keep current and news fans engaged?

MW: It honestly came out of necessity at first, in the sense, we spent close to 4 years to complete this album and we didn't want to 'blow our load' in a 10-week album campaign and then have it all be over with and on to the next one. As COVID hit, it also began to justify our decision to give our audiences a little taste of the upcoming album each month.

AU: How do think your new album *Hyper Reels* will be received by fans compared to your 2017 debut self-titled album?

MW: I think listeners should be excited about what I consider to be drastic improvements in the songwriting, performances, and production on *Hyper Reels*. We essentially refined all the best moments of album 1 and generated a more cohesive compositional structure for the tracks on *Hyper Reels*. There's a lot more attention to details in the vocal arrangements, many hours were

TORONTO TRASH

spent creating the layers and harmonies. There is also a presence of electronic music, we included synthesizers for the first time - which I think subtly supports key chorus sections and creates more atmosphere in the softer sections.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

MW: I think the first 5 tracks are us at our best. Not to knock the second half of the album, there are some great moments in all those songs - but I'm super proud of the flow and versatility the opening half of *Hyper Reels* deliver.

AU: How have Covid times affected the band?

MW: It has had a big impact on how the band operates, the songwriting over the past year has taken on a studio project kind of vibe - which is cool, more room for experimentation sonically but I certainly miss grinding out tunes organically in the practice room. We've got a surplus of material ready for album 3 so COVID certainly hasn't stopped the engine from running!

AU: What else should we know about you?

MW: I'm an Aquarius and I enjoy watching the sunrise - we've got a lot more content (playthroughs, podcasts, behind-the-scenes footage, etc) coming out on our Youtube channel so head over there for treats. We also have a community group on Facebook called Maitreya Posting, join in there for recent happenings!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

MW: I don't know who you are. I don't know what you want. If you are looking for a ransom I can tell you I don't have money, but what I do have are a very particular set of skills. Skills I have acquired over a very long career. Skills that make me a nightmare for people like you. If you listen to our album now that'll be the end of it. I will not look for you, I will not pursue you, but if you don't, I will look for you, I will find you and I will make you listen to *Hyper Reels*.

maitreymetal.bandcamp.com

COMIC BOOK ICONS: Michael T. Gilbert

Interview by Ira Hunter

AU: Who are we talking to?

Michael T. Gilbert: You're talking to one of comics' earliest indie cartoonists. I started out in the mid-70s writing and drawing underground comix including *Slow Death*, *American Splendor*, and *Bizarre Sex*, then morphed into one of the main "Ground-Level" cartoonists on titles like *Quack!*, *Star*Reach* and *Imagine*. I've also done a smattering of work for mainstream comics (Dr. Strange in Marvel Double-shot, a couple of solo comics featuring The Spectre and Batman, as well as the graphic novel, "*Mann and Superman!*" in 2000).



In the 1980s I was best known for working with Roy Thomas and P. Craig Russell on the sword and sorcery series, *Elric of Melnibone*, for Pacific Comics as well as my own monster fighting hero, Mr. Monster for a variety of publishers. My Mr. Monster stories specialize in cheap thrills and black humor.

From 1989 to 2008 I've also scripted stories for Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse and other Disney characters, and more recently wrote and drew goofy stories for Spongebob Comics.

Oh, and for the last 22 years I've written a column on weird comic book history for *Alter Ego* magazine (Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt).

AU: When did you first become interested in art and comic books?

MTG: I got into comics when I was six or seven in the late 50s. My grandma Nurock gave me my first comic (starring Superman's pal Jimmy Olsen!) and I was hooked ... hard!

AU: Who were some of your early influences?

MTG: I loved the Marvel monster comics of the late 50s and early 60s, especially the ones drawn by Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko, (who remain my artistic heroes). A few years later I discovered Will Eisner's Spirit series. Will became one of my strongest influences, both for his superb writing, innovative storytelling, and atmospheric art. Oh, and let's not forget the Mad paperbacks I read as a kid in the fifties. They reprinted stories from the original Mad comic books of the early 50s. They introduced me to the work of Harvey Kurtzman, Wally Wood, Jack Davis, Bill Elder, John Severin...cartoon giants all!



AU: What were your first published works?

MTG: Aside from getting comics printed in my high school and college newspapers, my first comic stories appeared in *New Paltz Comix* (named after my college in upstate New York). I self-published that in 1973. It

featured my first story, "*In The Interests Of Science*," from 1971. Three more issues followed, with the last one in 1982.

AU: Can you describe your artistic style?

MTG: Serio-comic. I lean towards a serious style, but with cartoony elements to lighten things. I'm not one of the realistic photo-reference guys, and tend to be a bit loose with my inking. I'm always experimenting with art and storytelling styles.

AU: What is the difference between underground comix and mainstream comics?

MTG: Comix tend to be a more direct conduit between the creator and the audience. One person (generally) writes and draws their stories with a minimal amount of interference from editors or publishers. And of course, most comix artists own their creations. The trade off is that you can often get a larger readership with mainstream comics, plus more job security and a bigger paycheck...at least initially.



AU: How did you get your big break into the comic industry?

MTG: I moved from NY to the Bay Area in 1975 and was able to sell a few short underground comix stories. Shortly after I got involved with Mike Friedrich's *Star*Reach* company, where I sold my first series, *The Wraith*. *The Wraith* (a hard-boiled detective dog) was a parody of Will Eisner's Spirit, and appeared in all six issues of *Star*Reach*'s new funny animal comic, *Quack!* That led to work in Mike's sci-fi/fantasy comics *Star*Reach* and *Imagine*. Friedrich later became my agent, which later led to my work on *Elric* and *Mr. Monster*.

AU: How did you approach the Elric comics you worked on that were based on the Michael Moorcock fantasy novels? Did you ever get to meet the original author?

MTG: I had never done a sword and sorcery series until Elric. My partner Craig Russell had done an Elric graphic novel for Marvel before our six-issue series, and I followed his lead.

And I did get to meet Michael Moorcock at some comic con in the late '80s. Seemed like a very nice guy.

AU: Tell us about the origin of your Mr. Monster comic.

MTG: I was at a comic convention in New York in 1971 and found a coverless Golden Age comic. The lead feature was a monster-fighter called Mr. Monster by cartoonist Fred Kelly. As it happened there were only two stories featuring Kelly's Mr. Monster before his company folded and he moved into selling real estate (I actually got to meet Fred in 2004, a year before he passed away!). In 1983 I was invited by Pacific Comics to come up with a new feature, I remembered the old Mr. Monster comic and completely redesigned him for the 80s.

AU: What work have you done for Marvel and DC?

MTG: I did a Batman story for *Legends of the Dark Knight* #94, a Penguin story (written by Peter David and laid out by Craig Russell) for *Showcase* '94 #7, the Superman graphic novel, "*Mann and Superman!*" and an issue of *Secret Origins* featuring

The Spectre. Also a few assorted short stories for their "*Big Book of...*" series and a Sandman pin-up.

The only story I've done for Marvel appeared in *Marvel Double-Shot* #4. That was a Dr. Strange story written and drawn as a tribute to the original creators, Stan Lee and Steve Ditko.

AU: What are some of your career highlights and works you are most proud of?

MTG: I'm especially proud of my 200 page graphic novel, *Mr. Monster: Origins*, which took me almost four years to complete. I love my "*Mann and Superman!*" graphic novel and my Batman tale, "*Stories*," for *Legends of the Dark Knight* #94.

And my three Elric graphic novels with Craig Russell and later George Freeman.

AU: What is the secret to writing a solid comic book script?

MTG: Start with

characters you really care about. Then invent situations for them that are engaging and (hopefully) original. Keep the story moving!

AU: What sorts of bands are you into? Have you ever done any album cover art?

MTG: I go mostly for the ones from my teens, like The Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel and the like. I enjoy some country and western, like Patsy Cline, Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson and so on. I think the female duo, Garfunkel and Oates, are hilarious. I've never had the opportunity to do an album cover.

AU: Any upcoming projects to promote?

MTG: I'm working on a 200 page book collecting all the Mr. Monster stories I did for *Dark Horse Presents* from 1987 to 2015. Should be out next year. I'm also producing a book for Fantagraphics called *Tops*. It reprints the two-issue 1949 series from the folks who produced the notorious *Crime Does Not Pay* comics. This short lived series was intended to be the first comic book specifically designed for adult readers, but was never given a chance to catch on. Today it's extremely rare, so I'm delighted to bring it back.

AU: What is something about you that people would be surprised to learn?

MTG: That for someone who hates moving as much as I do, over the decades I've lived in New York, California, Texas, Oregon and Ohio!

AU: Any advice for someone trying to break into the comic book industry nowadays?

MTG: Persistence and a second job, if possible. Between web comics and the zillions of comics that come out every month from dozens of publishers, there's more opportunities to get published than I could have dreamed when I was starting out.

AU: Any final words of wisdom for our readers?

MTG: Do what you love, not what you think the market wants. Be true to yourself.

AU: How do people find you online?

MTG: I have a Facebook page, with lots of examples of my work.

[facebook.com/michael.t.gilbert](https://www.facebook.com/michael.t.gilbert)



Female Fronted Punk Bands in China

By Ryan Dyer

Taking on a punk lifestyle is always a risk. In China, it might be even more of a risk as the mainly black-haired, homogeneous society isn't so welcoming to pink, six inch hair spikes and studded jackets.

Parents have particular hopes for their children and often feel shamed from their offspring taking on a heavily pierced, "antisocial" appearance. For both males or females, the support from peers is essential in achieving any amount of success in the subcultures. Most major Chinese cities have at least one or two main punk or metal bars where musicians will find this support (and often jobs).

Some of these bars in China include School Bar in Beijing, Inferno in Shanghai, DAFA Club in Tianjin, Prison in Wuhan and DMC in Qingdao. This crop of punk bands within China are currently making history by showing countless fans that it is perfectly normal to express yourself in a way that may not be accepted by modern Chinese society.



Hang On The Box

"I think there is a human nature for freedom, and punk is the best way to express this feeling," says Sheggy, drummer of China's first all girl punk band, Hang On The Box. Formed in 1998 when China was not so much opened to the outside

world, but was experiencing a new sort of cultural revolution from forms of media outside of the country, they could in some ways be considered the Chinese version of Pussy Riot. Vocalist Gia Wang has said that in the early days it was hard for the band to play in China and they were not welcomed by the Chinese market. Thus, HOTB signed to a Japanese label. Their cultural impact was enormous, as within just six months of their first live gig, they appeared on the cover of a Chinese edition of *Newsweek*, and served as poster girls for an entire generation of Chinese youth.

SUBS



From the center of China's punk scene in Beijing is SUBS, who have made a name for themselves as China's long running art punk idols. Fronted by Kang Mao — the self-appointed Queen of Fucking Everything (also the name of their 2010 album) — whose stage presence is as chic as former Crystal Castles crooner Alice Glass, SUBS' screaming garage-punk is one of the most coveted live experiences one can have in the country. Their latest full-length, *yoU aRe yoU*, experiments with new wave, post-punk, psych, and electronic. that have seeped in over the years. Despite their cult status, they have remained



icons due to being completely independent over the years - but why answer to anyone when you're the fucking queen?

Dummy Toys

It is rare to see punk fashion in China. Being such a homogeneous and conservative society, it is frowned upon and not worth the trouble to dress in outlandish ways - risking shame from parents or blatant discrimination, making it hard to get a job. This doesn't stop bands like Beijing's Hell City, with their giant pink mo-hawks, or the all-girl band from Qingdao, Dummy Toys, from sporting their studs, spiking their hair and flipping off anyone who judges their lifestyle. Their acidic anthem "Street Punk Girls" encapsulates this attitude to a tee and their songs are mainly short, punchy and hit like a hailstorm. Consider them the new Hang on the Box - something punk girls in the 2020s can



ABSOLUTE ASIA

aspire to be. Catch them in their home turf at the legendary DMC (Dirty Monster Club) bar in Qingdao.

Pizzaface

Cowabunga! Beijing's Pizzaface combines a street punk aesthetic with an unhinged stage presence which results in concerts looking like fight scenes in *Ninja Turtles* movies. True to their name, their merch includes monstrous pizza-faced pins. They have even played at a Beijing "Pizza Fest" in which people just looking to try out a slice were bombed with a live set from this abrasive band. Their sound ranges from fast songs to moody mid tempo pieces perfect for writhing around on the floor to. On cross country tours, their shows are unpredictable. At one such event, after climbing the speakers, the *Kill Bill*-outfitted frontwoman Spirit was given a rose by a concert attendee, which she promptly chewed up and swallowed.



Xiao Wang (Little King)

This new all girl punk ensemble is accompanied by cartoon caricatures on the flyers which promote their live shows, merchandise and stage backdrop. The Beijing based band has set an identity without having much performance experience yet - that of a crass, feisty and somewhat self-mocking group of lasses who come from a variety of influences - punk, hardcore, J-rock, and pop (which often has the band referred to as Kawaii-core). In 2020, they have been a part of some major punk festivals including Tsingtao Calling and Smash Your Ass. In a live setting, their music is combustible though hard to put on one throne- still, the spirit of DIY and self expression rules their little kingdom.

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LUST ART

AU: Who are you and what are your talents?

I go by Lust; love and lust are what drive my art and expression. Not lust in a sexual connotation but as passion, desire and hunger. You can't have a lust for something you don't care about, and I

have a lust for the art I do. I employ this ideology through my tattooing, graffiti, airbrush artwork, murals, design, etc.

AU: How long have you been an artist?

I've been living off my art since I was 19, but I was painting and doing graffiti far longer. Art and self-expression has always been in my veins; it's been my healthiest coping mechanism. Being able to express myself through art has been the ultimate blessing, motivator, and life-saver.

AU: Please describe the art you create.

Graphic, colourful and contrasted. A lot of it is representational but I love painting abstract, organic pieces. I have a huge appreciation for nature, human anatomy and architecture: inspiration is everywhere.



AU: Any influences on your artistic style?

Michelangelo, Mike Giant, Alex Grey, H.R. Giger. Salvador Dali... I don't have space to list all the artists who have influenced me, but the artists that have truly inspired me are those I've had the blessing to work closely with. Those who know, know.

AU: What are the secrets of becoming a quality airbrush artist?

I'm a self-taught airbrush artist. My first airbrush was given to me by the manager at my last 9-5 job. I dove into it with my background in graffiti, knowing very little about the application. I also



ARTIST PROFILE

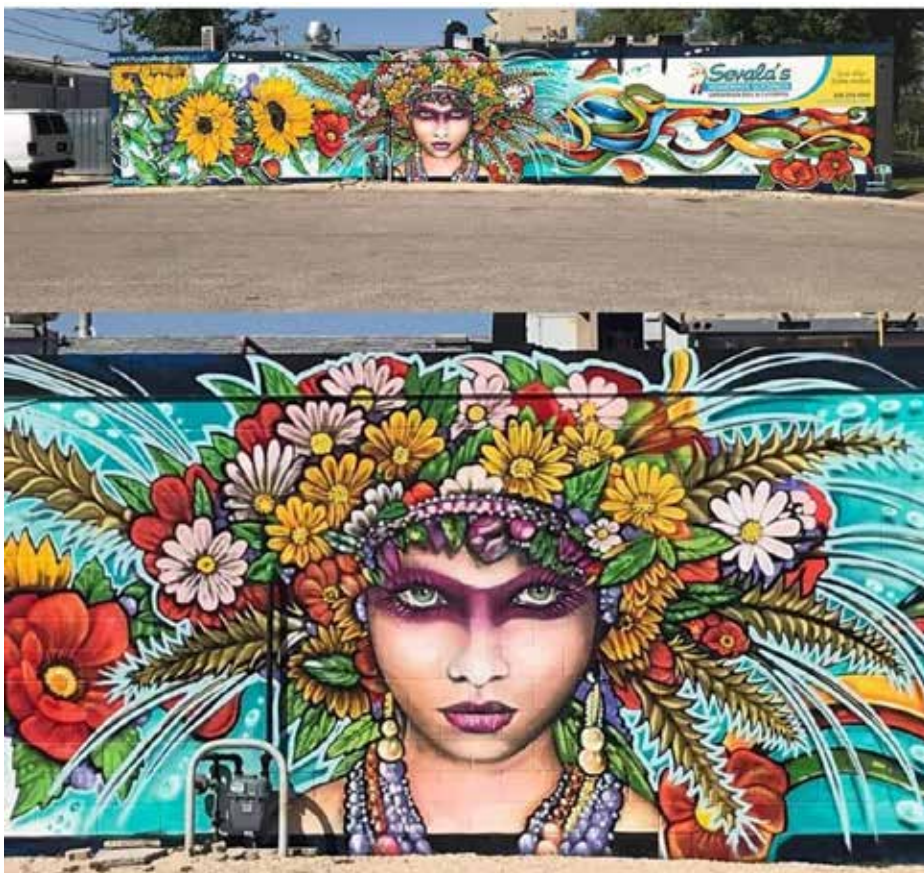
work out of Universal Tattoo at 1215 Wharf Street in Victoria, BC. (250-382-9417)

AU: What are your aspirations as an artist?

First of all, I feel blessed to do this art as my living. All I want is to continue to bring life to the visions of my clients, custom-tailoring the artwork uniquely to them. I love what I do; it spreads love to everyone regardless of how they receive it. In the future, I'm definitely planning to publish a book.

AU: Any other hidden talents unrelated to art?

When I was a kid I was watching Beat Street, K-tel



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taught airbrushing classes to all ages from beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. For me, patience, love and dedication is all it takes to grow in this craft.

AU: What music do you listen to when you're working?

A LOT of old school hip hop. Soul, Motown, Funk, 80's punk, electronic, deep house and classical music.

AU: Do you take commissions? What sort of services do you offer?

I offer custom canvas, automotive, large-scale murals, body painting, furniture and clothing design. I also offer tattooing

in all styles, as well as logo design and classes. I love working with independent business owners to beautify their spaces and the amazing city I live in.

AU: What's the strangest thing you've ever been asked to draw?

One time I had a woman ask me to draw a "sexy snake". I drew up a neotraditional snake with pinks/warm tones and flowers around it... She said I was way off the mark and clearly I'd never drawn anything before. She then slammed a pencil on the table and ordered me to draw, to which I cheekily added eyelashes and lipstick on it.



AU: Tell us about your tattoo skills as well.

I tattoo in all styles: Fine Line, Black and Grey, Lettering, Botanical, Neotraditional, Cover Up, Wild Life, etc. I really enjoy colour realism and would love to get back into portrait tattooing. I

Records... Straight 80's. I had a few guys take me under their wing and mentor me, I had so many amazing experiences dancing. It brought about and strengthened everything I do and am to this day. Bboy for life.

AU: Any interesting projects on the horizon?

I'm working on putting together an art show once Covid chills out. I'm also exploring a number of exciting collaborations and looking forward to releasing some clothing/merch I've been working on.



AU: Any final words for aspiring artists?

I know it's cliché but just do what you love. Don't sweat likes on social media. Do it all for love because at the end of the day if you touch somebody's life, it's worth it.

AU: Where can we see examples of your art?

My Instagram handle is @lustart77 where you can view my airbrush work. I also have many canvases decorating the walls of Universal Tattoo. You can see my tattoo work on the shop's Facebook page, "Universal Tattoo".



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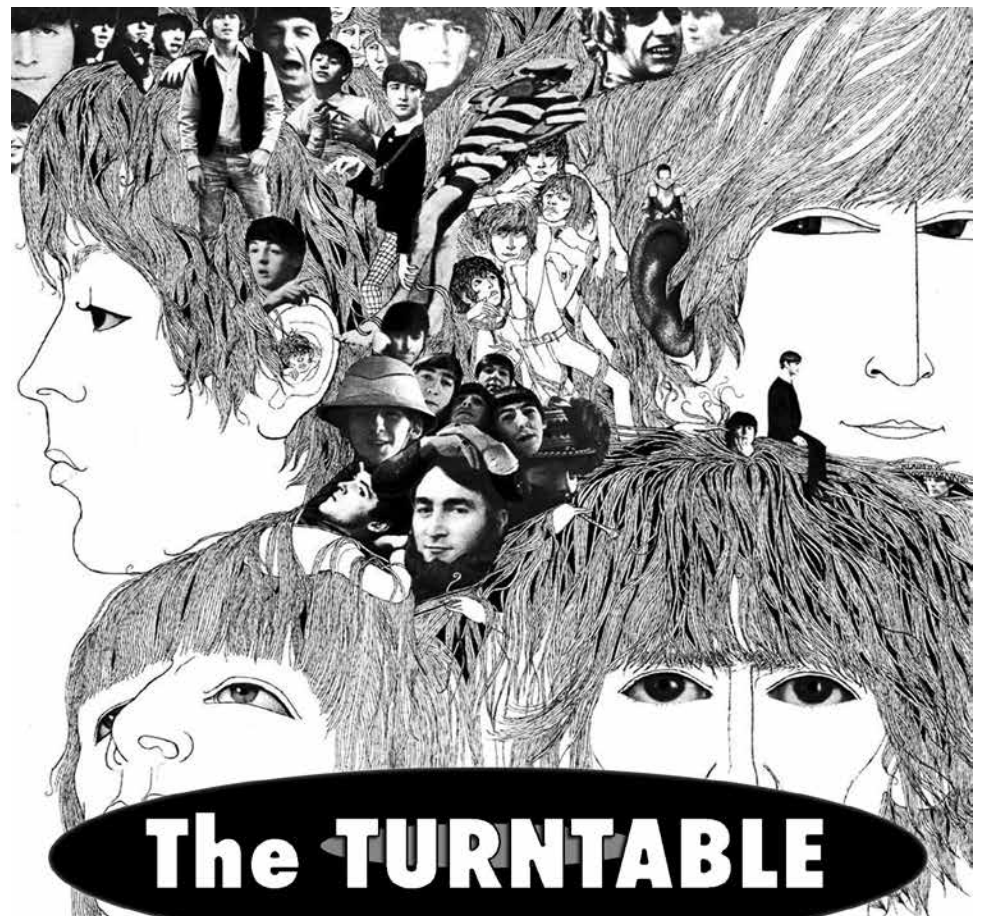
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CANNABIS CORNER



PHOTO CREDIT: ZENON KAI

BC Greens' lack of cannabis policy make it a weaker opposition party, VCBC says.

As the stalwart compassion club looks for more political support in its fight to exist, it can't count on what appears to be a likely ally.

By Natalia Buendia Calvillo

Members of the Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club are calling out the BC Green Party for not taking a stance on cannabis, saying that the party's leader — who has immediate family ties to staff at the club — has offered support in personal conversations, but hasn't followed up with any concrete action.

Club president Ted Smith says the lack of pot policy weakens the BC Greens' chances of competing with its progressive BC NDP rivals, which made several promises to the cannabis

industry ahead of a snap election held last October.

And with support for the non-profit compassion club coming from Victoria city council, federal Green MP Paul Manly and even B.C. Public Safety Minister Mike Farnworth, the provincial Greens' lack of acknowledgement looks like oversight or intentional omission.

"There are so many intricacies that if they want to be the opposition or the party in control, they need to have policies on [weed]," VCBC president Ted Smith said in a video call.

To expand its reach to a larger voter base in recent years, the traditionally pro-environment party has expanded its platform to cover a wider range of policy.

"Well here's an environmental, an economic and a medical one, that speaks to the core of what the Green Party should be," Smith says.



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The BC Green Party should also be pressuring the NDP's provincial government to make the announced programs happen, he explains, "Because it is for small farmers, for small businesses, for people that are trying to build community with this new economy."

Two of the BC NDP's programs set to launch in 2022 involve allowing sales at production sites and permitting small-scale producers to sell directly to retailers. A third program, which is supposed to launch this year, would promote Indigenous producers by highlighting their products in retail stores.

"We're a small growing party working to scale up our capacity so that we can expand the breadth of our policies and we weren't able to include cannabis in our 2020 platform due to the surprise snap election called by the BC NDP," BC Greens spokesperson Madeline Gareau tells Mugglehead in an email.

The BC Greens were previously members of a minority government alongside the BC NDP, Gareau adds, and former BC Green leader Andrew Weaver and current MLA Adam Olsen have advocated for the craft cannabis industry in legislative capacities in the past.

"For this specific case with the Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club, the BC Green Party is supportive of ensuring people have access to cannabis for medical purposes," continues Gareau, adding the party looks to expand its policy to include cannabis in its 2024 platform.

BC Greens leader Furstenu's family ties to VCBC staff could be cause of cold feet

In an unfortunate twist for the club's advocacy efforts, it could be that BC Greens leader Sonia Furstenu's immediate family ties to club staff are preventing her from taking a stance, fearing that showing support would be perceived as a conflict of interest.

"It seems like it is more important to be politically correct than to do the right thing," Smith notes.

VCBC communications officer, and Furstenu's niece, Nikki Jackson credits the club with saving her life after her mother brought her there to access medical cannabis nine years ago.

"I almost died from digestive issues when I was 19," Jackson says. "I was on over 15 different pharmaceuticals till my mother brought me [to the VCBC]." Her mother, VCBC treasurer Julie Furstenu is BC Green's leader Furstenu's sister.

Jackson says she's had conversations with her aunt about the club and its importance, but they only amount to verbal support.

"There have been conversations that [Furstenu] had with Farnworth, for example, that have gone nowhere and we've got nothing from," she says.

She doesn't expect the party to change the world, Jackson adds, but wants them to recognize the positive impact of the club.

"This club saved my life. I would have died without it and my mother is in the same boat."

Smith says they sought Furstenu's support as soon as they learned of her appointment as party leader.

"But we just get this lip service: 'We agree with you, but we are not going to do or say anything about it,'" he explains.

The green party should be standing up in the B.C. legislature, he says, and decrying how provincial authorities are trying to evict a compassion club in the middle of an opioid crisis and a pandemic.

The VCBC has been operating since 1996, and recently applied for an exemption from Health Canada to allow them to operate legally. However, Smith expects fines to come to his landlord anytime now, which the club has agreed to pay.

He also expects more punitive measures from the Community Safety Unit (CSU), B.C.'s cannabis enforcement squad which has raided the club twice since November 2019 and is leading the eviction effort.

"It wasn't a surprise, though, because the CSU doesn't buy it in terms of our arguments that we are medical," Smith says.



VCBC continues fight for right to exist

In contrast to his provincial peers, Nanaimo-Ladysmith MP Paul Manly of the federal Green Party wrote a letter of support for the club last October.

"Over the past 25 years the VCBC has been raided seven times by law enforcement, each time losing tens of thousands of dollars worth of medical cannabis products as well as money," it reads.

"The current model for access to medical cannabis does not work for everyone. I believe there is a good case to be made for the VCBC to be given an exemption from the regulations, in order for it to continue serving patients in need with a not-for-profit model based on service and compassion."

Last year, safety minister Farnworth wrote to Victoria's mayor — who had previously given her own support for an exemption — saying he too supported an exemption for the club to continue operating under Canada's cannabis laws.

This week, Smith had a meeting with B.C. Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Minister Murray Rankin, and is currently trying to arrange a meeting with Premier John Horgan.

Photo Credit: Nick Laba

Originally published online at mugglehead.com

Photo Captions

VCBC founder Ted Smith continues his 25-year fight for dignified access to medical cannabis in Canada.

VCBC communications officer Nikki Jackson, who says the club saved her life, was hoping for more support from her aunt, BC Green Party leader Sonia Furstenu.



LYCANTHRO

AU: How did Lycanthro come to be?

Lycanthro originally started from the ashes of my old band called *Death Wish*. I've always had a huge affinity for wolves and I wanted to have our name and imagery to reflect that. I liked the name "Lycanthrope" but I found a bunch of bands already had that name. So I took the "PE" off and I really liked how the name Lycanthro sounded.

AU: Describe your sound in five words?

Wolves eating a dragon's carcass!

AU: Top 5 Bands that your band sounds like.

1. Judas Priest
2. Saxon
3. Blind Guardian
4. Persuader
5. Manowar

AU: Lycanthro just released its debut album "Mark of The Wolf" on June 4th on Alone Records, how do think it will be received by fans compared to your debut EP "Four Horsemen of The Apocalypse"

We think it will be received very well compared to the previous and we think it is mainly due to the heightened production value. We made it a point on this album to make the album sound/production top priority. We made all of the songs and the passages within as sleek and polished as we could both on the playing and sound front. To cap it off we hired a veteran mixer (Jason Jaknunas) and bright up-and-coming mastering engineer (Jack Kosto) to make the album sound more pristine than our previous outputs.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

The two singles "Crucible" and "Evangelion". "Crucible" mainly because it has been a fan favourite and live staple for us for years. It was a song that appeared on our original demo and we felt as though this song deserved the proper production. We were curious to see how fans who've seen us live would react to the song recorded and so far, the positive response has been overwhelming! "Evangelion" on the other hand we are stoked on because it's the song that took the most effort and lots of blood, sweat, and tears went into it and we felt as though it really shows on the track. Lastly, "Fallen Angels Prayer" is a stand-out track just because of the amount of

production that went into it, we have everything from piano, flute, violin to a choir and we are curious to see how the listeners react to something so different from the rest of the album.

AU: What kind of listening experience are you trying to give fans with this album, its singles?

The main thing we try to go for with our music is diversity and this album is no exception. This album has something for all metalheads from all walks of life. There's everything from power, thrash, speed, and even some symphonic and groove metal sections. The main thing that we strive for is that no two songs sound alike, while still keeping to our roots which is power and old-school metal. We always like to follow the same philosophy that Queen implements. They never wrote the same song twice, but all their songs sound like Queen. We

never want to write the same twice, while still sounding like Lycanthro.

AU: We understand you recorded this album in a cabin in the woods at Wolf Lake Studios in Lac-des-Loups, Quebec. How did you find the recording process being so secluded?

Looking back on it now it had its ups and downs. On one hand, it was a really unique experience to have the odd pairing of recording and a pseudo-camping trip, and

the facilities are perfect for recording guitars/drums, etc. But looking back it was tough on me personally vocal-wise because I never used to get a lot of sleep there and it made it that much harder to record the vocals properly. Overall, it was a really cool experience and the facilities are fantastic.

AU: We noticed you also recruited the mastering talents of Jack Kosto (guitarist for Seven Spires), how did that come to be?

We got to open for Seven Spires both times they came here to Ottawa and we got to know them fairly well. They are one of our favourite bands not just musically but as people so the connection came naturally. I was very impressed with the final result. We plan on having him come aboard in a producer role on the next few releases as our styles, we feel gel really well.

AU: How did this pandemic affect the band?

I see now that the pandemic was both a blessing and a curse for the band. It obviously ruined our touring plans and two of our members left around the beginning of the pandemic. But at the same time, we used this time for some regrouping that we've needed for a long time now. Now we've found our new guys, we have had all the time in the world to get as tight as we can as a band and to experiment with different forms of

content (like our Instagram live show) that we didn't have the time to before.

AU: Any plans to hit the road after Covid?

Absolutely. We found out recently that we just got re-confirmed for the Hyperspace Metal Festival.

AU: How would you sum up this past 2020? And how do you think 2021 will turn out?

This past 2020 was definitely a very sobering year. We did get to play a few shows at the start like opening for Ross the Boss from Manowar and playing Montreal. But most of the year was very depressing but as I said earlier it was a great time to re-group. In terms of 2021, so far we've adapted enough that we are still being productive even though the pandemic isn't over. But overall, I can quite confident that we will see full capacity shows by the end of the year.

AU: Anything else to promote?

Aside from our upcoming album, we recently participated in a tribute album to the legendary German band *Running Wild* where we recorded a cover of their classic track "Port Royal". It was a really great experience to pay homage to such a legendary band. Pick up the tribute album from the *Burning Sun Records* Bandcamp page.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Check out our new album "Mark of the Wolf" on Spotify, Youtube, and Bandcamp if you are a fan of power or old-school metal! Stay metal my friends!

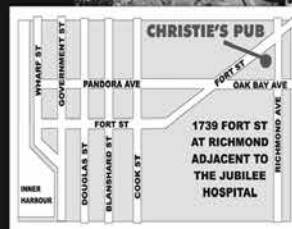
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THE BLACK HALOS HEADLINE CURSED BLESSINGS RECORDS' UPCOMING RELEASE SCHEDULE

Rarely, since 2008's "We Are Not Alone" have we heard much new music from Vancouver's favourite pack of troublemakers The Black Halos. That all changes with the upcoming release of their eagerly anticipated EP "UNCOMMONWEALTH", released exclusively by Toronto upstart label CURSED BLESSINGS RECORDS. Billy Hopeless and the gang power through 3 explosive tracks (one is a cover) which pick up right where The Black Halos left off. The title track is a perfect example of the evolution of this already incredible band, declaring with a snarl that "There's no such thing as commonwealth!". This is not a release to sleep on, pre-orders are available for a limited time on the Cursed Blessings website.



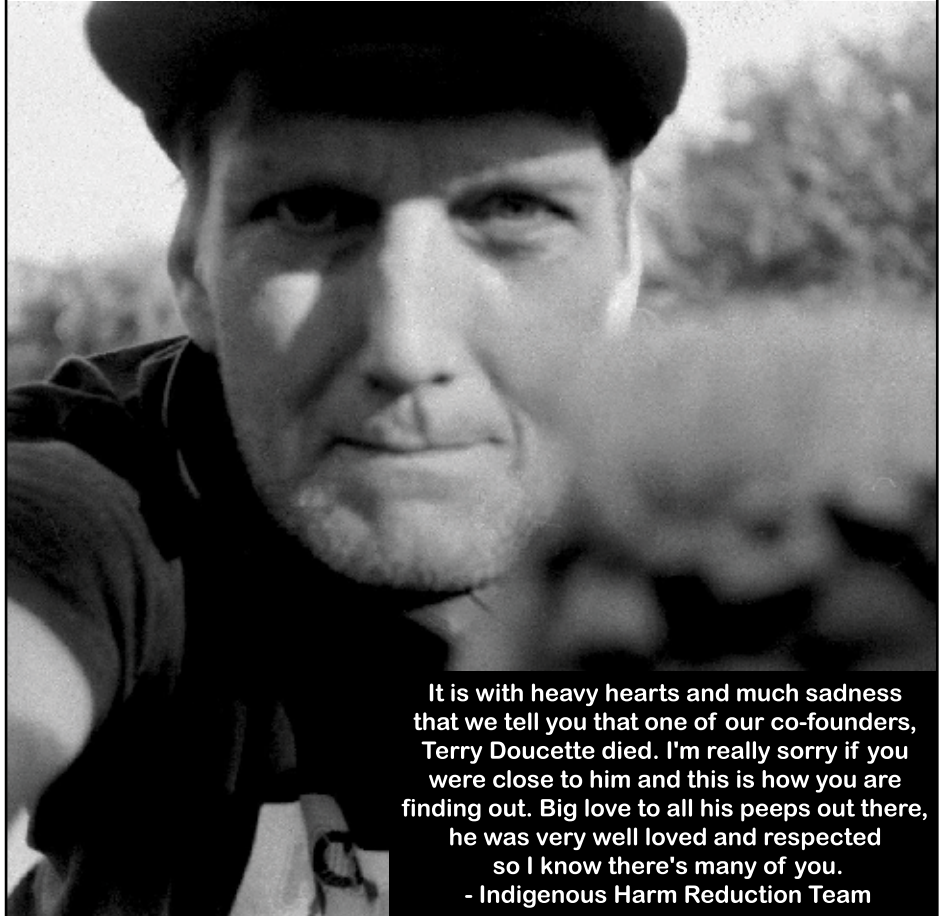
Future releases from Canadian thrash legends SACRIFICE & SLAUGHTER as well as Industrial-Metal icons MALHAVOC, Rochester hardcore's finest REVIVAL, Good Riddance frontman RUSS RANKIN, MODERN TERROR, THE SLIP-ONS, THE SINISTERS, RANDOM KILLING and the legendary RICHARD DUGUAY are all still to come from Cursed Blessings Records!! Keep track of this whirlwind schedule at

www.cursedblessingsrecords.com

This fantastic EP headlines a torrid and incredible summer/fall release schedule for AI Nolan's popular new label. Sunderland UK Oi! legends RED ALERT are teaming up with Toronto's Oi! kings ROUGH CUTS for the "DOUBLE AYE/EH SIDE" split 7", complete with soccer themed bundle packages (both bands love their footy). Toronto Ska-punkers THE FILTHY RADICALS unleash their long awaited FREEDOM 45 EP which is already garnering a lot of hype and attention. Siksika Nation Alberta hardcore force NO MORE MOMENTS have put the finishing touches on their debut Cursed Blessings EP "Quarter Life Crisis" with CANCER BATS' Scott Middleton behind the mixing board. Toronto's trippy-hardcore giants RULES will release their Stomp Records release "The Bummer Circus Comes to Truth City" on vinyl through Cursed Blessings in the early fall and is almost assuredly going to sell out of its initial run. Rounding out this incredible run of vinyl releases is Victoria BC's FULLY CRAZED with their blazing debut LP "Off the Hook", which adequately describes this full on audio assault!

R.I.P. TERRY DOUCETTE

Feb 23, 1975 - June 4, 2021



It is with heavy hearts and much sadness that we tell you that one of our co-founders, Terry Doucette died. I'm really sorry if you were close to him and this is how you are finding out. Big love to all his peeps out there, he was very well loved and respected so I know there's many of you.
- Indigenous Harm Reduction Team

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SKIDS

From One Skid To Another

Interview with vocalist, lyricist, and founding member Richard Jobson by Billy Hopeless

As a kid, before I discovered punk, one of the ballsiest bands I ever discovered was Nazareth. Years later when punk broke into my life it came as no surprise that another of such kicks to my rock and roll bollocks came from another band from the same Scottish township of Dumferline. So here now many eons later I sit working for the Loonie dollar and though I'm not scared to dance. I find myself a bit giddy as a young fan boy beginning this interview with Mr. Richard Jobson, vocalist, lyricist, and founding member of the Skids.

Billy Hopeless: First of thank you for this honor and privilege. I remember first hearing and seeing the Skids perform *Into The Valley* when I was a young lad on a local cable access punk T.V. show and have been a fan ever since. But enough idle worship, let's get moving. Since you first put the pedal down in 1977 you've put on the breaks a few times but keep coming back and making new skids. What keeps you skidding ?

Richard Jobson: First of all, thank you for the kind words. It means a lot! The music and words still feel relevant and the energy makes me feel 16 years old again. Most importantly it's great to meet and communicate with people from different backgrounds and share something we all love: Music!!

BH: And with these starts and stops you've had a few understandable blow outs and tire changes in the bands roster so who's in the lineup now and where did you pick them up?

RJ: The band is made up of original member Bill Simpson on bass and the Watsons from BC on guitars. They were both big Skids fans and have brought a freshness to the sound that I could never have dreamed of. It also means I don't have to play guitar and leaves me free to jump about - some people call it dancing but I would never dare.

BH: BC? I'm from BC too. Oh you mean Big Country, of course... So I'm told via this age of modern technology known as the internet that you have a new album of cover songs on the way. Considering you've been covered by the likes of U2 and Green Day, it makes me wonder if you'll cover either of them? Why did you decide to do an album of covers instead of writing a new album and what classics are you putting your own personal skid marks on?

RJ: We are working on a new album of original material but during the Covid crisis we wanted to do something that reminded us of how much our past history in Dunfermline was dangerous but fun. New material is on its way. I'm writing with the Watsons, Hugh Cornwall, Martin Metcalfe and

Youth. The covers album is an eclectic mix of punk and beyond. Songs that meant something to us in the context of our home town.

BH: Wow! Hugh Cornwall that's Skin Deep indeed. Speaking of influential bands you've



got some first place upcoming dates with some pretty big names. You're opening for The Damned, heading a huge roster at Scarborough Punk Festival (999, Peter and the Test Tube Babies, The Vibrators, Menace and so forth) as well as a few dates with yer departed and sorely missed bandmate Stuart's band Big Country. Do you still get a kick out of playing live? And if you could share a stage with any artist alive or dead who would yer bucket list double bill be?

RJ: I love playing live. It's where it all comes together and has real meaning for me. I love sharing stories and having a laugh with the audience. We played with most of the great Punk bands but would have loved to have shared the stage with Iggy. He is still my great hero!! He introduced us on his radio show recently as being a cool band from LA which was very funny!

BH: Now I'm not going to bring up the past controversy the Skids endured back in the 80's but as in this modern world we have thing the

HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

new generation have called cancel culture going on. As someone who went through the same sort of thing before it was fresh and groundbreaking mainstream. Tell us your opinion on censorship versus artistic freedom or in today's market "cancel culture".

RJ: People should be allowed to express themselves as long as it does no harm to anyone. I don't mean over sensitive bullshit but real harm like racism, sexism, and homophobia.

BH: Oh, shit I did just bring up your past controversy ever so slightly and with respect and grace didn't I ? Well while the inquisition is google searching the bands history let me dance on the eggshells of time a bit more. It was during this situation I understand that British Columbia's (hopefully they haven't changed the provincial name before this comes out) own producer extraordinaire Bruce Fairburn was brought in as part of the clean-up crew. What do you remember of working with Sir Bruce of Fairburn?

RJ: Virgin Records didn't like the Bill Nelson mix of *Days in Europa*. Bruce stepped in and did a fine job highlighting the guitar work of Stuart Adamson.

The two mixes were always available. Some critics accused me of Nazi Fetishism because of the original sleeve. The same critics who loved JOY DIVISION and NEW ORDER!. The original album was never withdrawn because of the artwork. That's a myth. I was living in Berlin at the time and found an old poster in a flea market which we used. The album was originally going to be called The Olympian. I changed it to *Days in Europa* because I used to wait for my German girlfriend every day after work in Berlin at The Europa Centre where she worked.

BH: Sorry you had to bring that up again. Well, I'm sure that's all-troubled water under the bridge now as Paul Simon says so let's stay current. From my own

bands personal experience this whole Covid spill happened with no warning. It was all smooth sailing and then whammo stuck I'm the muck. How have you been coping with the shit situation and have you been keeping yourself musically occupied ?

RJ: I've been writing lots. Finished two new books and the new Skids album *Songs from a Haunted Ballroom*. I move between the UK and Berlin and

have been stuck in England during the pandemic. The country is undergoing a massive political and cultural transformation, and it's not good. Our politicians are lying bastards yet the English public love them. It's terrible.

BH: I still haven't found an honest politician and don't think they exist. Thank God for the modern advancements, couldn't imagine going through this without the computer phone. Speaking of which, once again via the interweb I keep seeing these posts saying vinyl is outselling digital music. Since we both come from when the only choices of obtaining music were in physical forms such as the vinyl record and I see your albums are all out in vinyl past and present. Tell us do you still spin the sounds on a turntable or have you got down to the loaded files ?

RJ: I love vinyl. The amazing sleeves that we grew up with from different bands defined a new kind of graphic art. Especially punk.

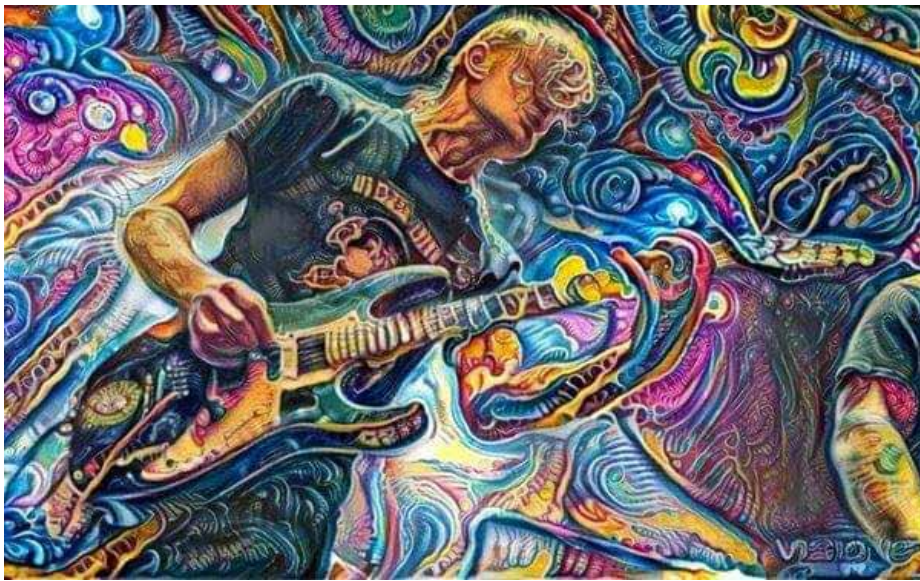
BH: Especially Punk that's a great album title. Well thank you again for your time tolerance and music. This brings us to the traditional reader email in question. Today's question comes from little Steven Vincent of Scotland Rocks Radio who writes: Hi Richard, did you ever think when you played that first ever gig at the Bellville Hotel that you would have the musical legacy you have now ?

RJ: Hi Steven. I'm surprised to still be alive and doing things. I have had the condition of epilepsy since childhood and I always thought I would never make it past 20. Each night on stage I treated it like it might be the last. That's still the case today which for me at least makes each Skids gig unique and full of unbridled joy!

Well kids, there ya have it, we've skidded out of room in this month's column. So until the next case of hoplessness let me tell you this... After our conversation those swell people at Cleopatra Records sent me a play copy of the new Skids Cover album and it rules from the first ripping run from Ultravox's Young Savage till the closing number. Not only do they do great classics by bands such as The Clash and The Adverts justice but they burn em with the eternal flamethrower of punk rock like a newly born bunch of anarchist arsonists! So Good to hear a band that was there back in the birth nowhere ready to retire but screaming open Fire !

www.the-skids.com
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www.CleopatraRecords.com





Canadian Punk Legend Murray "The Cretin" Acton of Dayglo Abortions releases debut solo project.

Canadian Punk legend Murray "The Cretin" Acton of Dayglo Abortions releases his debut album *Covid-19 Nervous Breakdown*. This album is a direct result of when you lock down an artist who has spent his life on the road. Spawned from the boredom and frustration that have plagued the last year, this blatantly honest album delves deep into the mind of a caged artist!

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

MA: I'm Murray Acton, that lovable cretin from the Dayglo Abortions.

AU: How did you first get the moniker "The Cretin"?

MA: Yah, well, if I got to make up my own nickname, I would have picked something a bit cooler than "The Cretin" but I didn't. I picked it up in a school I got sent to, this one was a very strict English style rugby school. Most of the teachers were total assholes. It was them that gave me the nickname "cretin" and they would add miserable or wretched on it for extra flavour. It eventually got rounded off to the cretin.

AU: Tell us about your debut solo endeavour entitled *Covid-19 Nervous Breakdown*.

MA: This could also be called 'How I Kept Sane Through the Covid-19 Pandemic While Everything I Do, and Everything That Makes Me Who I Am Was Banned'. It all started with the first lockdown of the Covid crisis. We (the Dayglos) had just finished a tour of western Canada and the lockdown orders came out on our last night in Vancouver. We might have been the last band to play in the country, seeing as we were the last band on stage on the Saturday night in the most western timezone. Anyway the next day we

went from being on the road, where everybody loves you and the drinks are free, to more or less isolation with minimal human contact. It was a bit of a shock, and it was getting me down. I started writing songs about the things that were happening because of the restrictions and peoples reactions to what was being called "the new normal" I really didn't have any intention of releasing the stuff beyond maybe posting some of them on social media etc... I just needed to keep busy so I didn't go nuts. Once I had a fair bit of material recorded I thought, what the fuck, I've got a shitload of weird ass tunes that are actually about something current and relevant, maybe I should release my own solo project.

AU: Did you enjoy doing this project by yourself or did you miss the collaborative aspects of working with other band members?



MA: Actually that's the way I have written almost all of my music. Once the songs are complete I'd make a demo and give it to the other band members. We would then (in theory) rehearse the tunes, get the bugs out of them, then go and record somewhere. More often than not, the other guys were learning the songs in the studio as they were being recorded.

AU: Tell us about some of the stand-out tracks.

MA: That's hard for me to say really. I write most of my music for myself to help me process the world around me. It's cheaper and more effective than a psychiatrist and you get to pick your own medication. I like all the music I make, even when it obviously sucks, I still like it because it was custom tailored for me. There are some though that I know will appeal to other people for one reason or another. From what I've been told people are liking "A Cold Goodbye," and the catchy public service announcement "Stop Touching Your Face." Personally I kinda like "I've Got Snot," and "Obsessive Compulsive Attention Deficit Disorder" or whatever it's called.

AU: What is the framework of a good punk rock

song in your opinion?

MA: Punk Rock is a genre that allows almost any style of music imaginable to be played on its stages. There is a rebellious, anti-authoritarian, theme running through it, with songs often telling the story of a real life struggle, or the hardships of life. As far as I'm concerned, if you are singing about picking up chicks, driving fast cars, or partying... it doesn't matter what it sounds like, it's pop music. There's a lot of pop music that sounds like punk, and visa versa. With punk you can expect the music to be aggressive, and it's common to avoid traditional arrangements like the blues, and try for something more unexpected. Even jazz relies heavily on traditional arrangements. It's true that a lot of the early punk was basically just reworked rock'n roll songs but that got boring quick, and seeing as it's a genre that attracted people who often had no music training, and were not inclined to follow along with what everyone else was doing, punk rock took off in every direction. Don't try to follow someone else's framework, be original. I like the music to fit the story. That's why pretty well every song on my solo album is different from the others. Then again, what the fuck do I know? You would be more successful playing songs that sounds like Sum41, but that wouldn't make it good punk rock.

AU: Any survival tips for surviving this current pandemic?

MA: Yah, don't get sick and die. To be honest this whole thing really pisses me off. For starters, They (if they had the desire to do so, which they obviously don't) could have stopped this whole thing in its tracks a year ago, if they had listened to the front line doctors and used a cheap generic antiviral drug called Ivermectin. It has been demonstrated by numerous studies to be almost 100% successful at preventing you from catching Covid-19, and helping you fight it when you do catch it. It's made around the world by numerous companies and easy to ramp up supplies. But it's not going to make the big bucks that big pharma plans on raking in on their overpriced under tested RNA vaccines that go figure, aren't even a vaccine. You can still catch and spread Covid, unlike with Ivermectin, Covid can't live in your body if you take it. Now we find out that the fucking thing was probably leaked out of a lab doing high risk Gain of Function research where they take a virus and modify it so it can infect humans, then try and develop a vaccine for it before they accidentally release it. But they do know that if it does get out, they will make billions of dollars selling drugs to treat it, so who cares eh. Well I fucking care, and I'm guessing

everyone else does too. At least they would if they pulled their heads out of their asses and looked at what is really going on here. These fucking cocksuckers at the WHO, and the CDC, and their partners in pig pharma are responsible for this, and they plan on doing it again. We should not be letting people like this run our world.

AU: Is there plans to release another Dayglo Abortions album and tour again when the Apocalypse is over?

MA: Well now that you mention it, we are right in the middle of recording the new album. It's a bit of a process because we're doing it lockdown style. We each do our own parts then send them down the line for the next guy to do theirs. It's taking a bit of time but it's coming together just fine. We have some killer heavy songs that should be a bit of a shocker for some people, but exactly what the fans of the Dayglos expect out

of me, and they are quite clear about their expectations. The songs were all written through the Trump years up to the present day, and will comment on the state of the world as I see it.

AU: Final words of wisdom for our readers.

MA: Yah, for some reason we have built a world for ourselves that is totally controlled by narcissistic sociopaths. Maybe it's time to do a bit of self reflection and figure

why we allow them domination over us and what we can do to correct the situation.

AU: How can people listen to *Covid-19 Nervous Breakdown*?

MA: I would of course like to do a physical release of the solo project at some point, but for now, you can download it, free of charge, from my band camp page murraythecretinacton.bandcamp.com

Track list:

You Might Think This is Funny But it's Snot

Wash Your Fucking Hands

Klein Toilettenpapier

Face Book Bots

A Cold Goodbye

Obsessive Compulsive Attention Deficit Disorder

Telephone

One Two Three Seven Four

Covid-19 Lockdown Blues

Boredom Has it's Side Effects

Stop Touching Your Face

Covid-19 Nervous Breakdown

facebook.com/cretin.dayglo

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Look Who's Turning 40!

I have to admit that I was a little shocked to see a *Friday the 13th Part II* limited steelbook in Wal-Mart last month, so soon after the insane multiple-blu-ray boxset release from Scream Factory. And, there were no other *Friday the 13th* steelbooks on the shelves – I picked it up purely out of curiosity, only to see it was a commemorative 40th anniversary edition. 40 years? Holy shit. I was a kid, a budding slasher and horror-movie fan, when “Part 3-D” came out on videotape and “The Final Chapter” was released into the theatres. Crazy. When studios like Paramount began re-releasing their catalogue genre films on Blu-ray circa 2008, that was a great excuse to re-experience the first few *Friday the 13th* films (for a few years I could only find parts I – IV on Blu-ray), and during this time I got a completely overhauled appreciation for Part II – and to this day it's still my favorite of the series. I love the look of the film, I love that Jason hadn't become cliched yet, I love Steve Miner's direction and I love the writing of the camp counselor characters – I think out of all the *Friday the 13ths*, Part II portrays the soon-to-be-victims as truly likable, down-to-earth, and funny. One of my favourite scenes is the charming Jeff (Bill Randolph from DePalma's *Dressed to Kill*) trying to keep up with a tow-truck on foot – “Hey, asshole, this is my truck!”

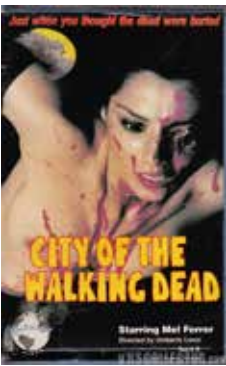
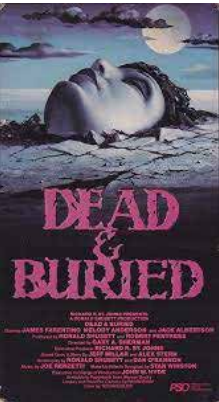
Finding that steelbook got me wondering about other horror films from that year, and I knew there would likely be some amazing classics there. This would prove to be a massive understatement – also turning 40 this year is John Landis' *An American Werewolf in London*, which I firmly believe to be one of the best-written films in movie history. It was a masterpiece for Landis, and for the entire werewolf sub-genre. If you can believe it, 1981 was also the year that the other two of the top-three werewolf films ever made came out in North America – Joe Dante's masterpiece *The Howling* (based on the novel by Gary Brandner), and Whitley Strieber's *Wolfen*, directed in a weirdly giallo-esque and totally satisfying style by Michael Wadliegh, whose cinematic claim to fame was directing the famous *Woodstock* feature film documentary.

This year is also the 40th anniversary of Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead* – the one that completely turned the entire horror genre on its head through its nearly insane camera aerobatics and punchy, funny style, which itself veered into the territory of sheer hysterics (rape of the vines, anyone?) and utterly wince-inducing horror with a B2 pencil. One of my personal all-time favourite directors, Tobe Hooper, released his last pre-Poltergeist film that year, too; the weirdly underrated (yet oddly no-less-famous) *The Funhouse*, which actually serves as a particularly interesting segue film from his independent-horror heyday (*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Eaten Alive*) to directing a blockbuster-horror for Steven Spielberg. Even this early in the slasher sub-genre, *Friday the 13th* and *Halloween*



knock-offs were starting to rear their severed heads 40 years ago – coincidentally, one of these films also happened to be *Halloween II*, which had been written and produced by John Carpenter and Debra Hill, the original *Halloween* filmmaking duo, but the sequel-directing duties went over to Rick Rosenthal and enjoyed an expanded mythos regarding the relationship between antagonist and protagonist, Michael Meyers and Laurie Strode. We also got *Happy Birthday to Me*, and the Canadian slasher classic *My Bloody Valentine* (which also helped launch the Canadian slasher boom of the 1980s), *Madman* (which starred Romero collaborator Gaylen Ross), and *Graduation Day*, which was directed by Herb Freed (and those of us who would obsessively heck out the backs of the VHS boxes in the horror section of the video store may have incidentally committed his name to memory); Freed went on to become a Rabbi after a short career directing horror and exploitation films during the video-store boom of the 1980s.

An absolute stand-out from this era was Gary Sherman's *Dead & Buried*. Sherman had directed the UK horror classic *Raw Meat*, which was an incredible experiment in underground horror (and probably the influence for Clive Barker's “Midnight Meat Train”), but he took the horror genre way further with *Dead & Buried*, a film that should have been way more influential than it turned out to be. Based on a script by Ronald Shusett and Dan O'Bannon (*Alien*), this is one of the best, creepiest, and most stylish small-town gory-mysteries to be found, boasting a storytelling style that may be overused today but was completely novel at the time the film came out, and still serves to inspire all these years later. While I'll have to unfortunately rush past Brian DePalma's absolute masterpiece *Blow Out* from that year, as it's not strictly a “horror” film, although it contains some of the best horror-movie tropes and twists them on their head with wild irony – some other weird and interesting releases that are turning 40 this year are Joe D'Amato's *Absurd*, Lucio Fulci's *The Black Cat*, Andrea Bianchi's *Burial Ground* (and those of you who are my age know you've seen all of the VHS tape facings), Umberto Lenzi's *Cannibal Ferox*, Wes Craven's *Deadly Blessing* (which starred a pre-Basic Instinct Sharon Stone), and in all absolute seriousness, one of my favourite “weird”-horror films, Oliver Stone's *The Hand*, which stars Michael Caine as the protagonist who loses a hand in a bizarre car accident and is then



relentlessly stalked by the severed prehensile. This is actually one of my top-three Oliver Stone films, which was based on the novel “The Lizard's Tale” by Marc Brandel, and I just happened to see that it's been re-released on Blu-ray this year from Scream Factory. But the mecca of fringe horror from 1981 had to have been Lucio Fulci's enigmatic gore-horror *The Beyond* and Canadian filmmaker David Cronenberg's genre-bending classic *Scanners*. Circling back to novels, I'm compelled to mention that a few literary horror works turning forty this year are the ever-prolific Stephen King's mad-dog opus “Cujo” and his alter-ego Richard Bachman's short novel “Roadwork”, the latter which is one of those novels that *nobody ever talks about* but is actually a sincerely interesting chapter in King's amazing repertoire. Whitley “Wolfen” Strieber birthed the lesbian vampire urban-gothic novel “The Hunger” and Bari Wood gave us what I consider to be her best horror work (that I've had the pleasure of reading so far), “The Tribe”. Switching up sub-genres for just a quick moment here, 1981 also saw the release of some very classic post-apocalyptic genre films – John Carpenter's *Escape from New York*, the Canadian

animation masterpiece *Heavy Metal* (which was also co-written by Dan O'Bannon from *Dead & Buried*), and the action-packed crowd-pleasing road-movie-from-hell *The Road Warrior* (aka *Mad Max 2*). Clearly, while the 1980s was a golden age for horror, 1981 was overall a wildly exciting glimmer of that golden era, reaching beyond these individual films mentioned here and worming into film auteurs' lengthy and successful film careers, along with planting the first seeds of many horror and post-apocalyptic franchises. This was without a doubt a wonderful time to be discovering horror films, and I'm both happy and nostalgic to be celebrating the 40th Anniversary of all of these crazy, boundary-breaking, influential films and iconic novels that helped change the way we see and think about horror films... well, forever! -Vince D'Amato darksidereleasing.com



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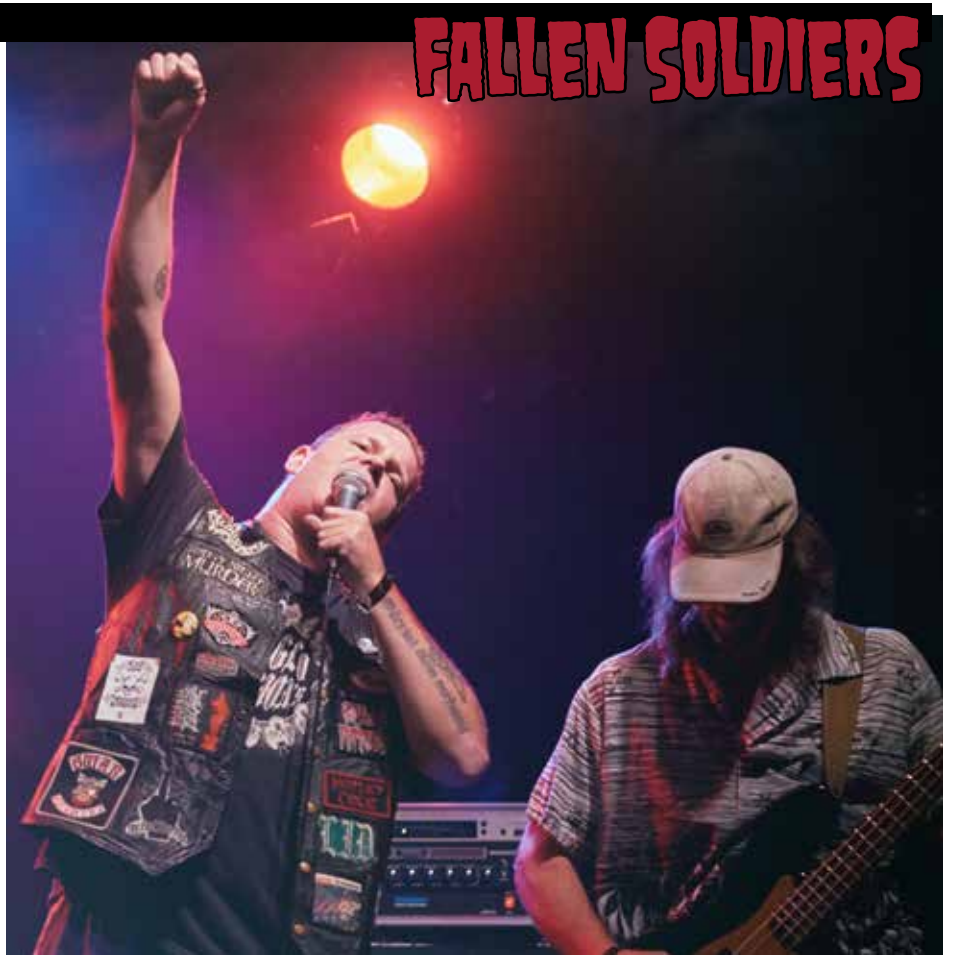
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FALLEN SOLDIERS



In Memoriam: Aaron Clark

By Jordan Clark

On May 15 th , 2021 Aaron Clark left an immeasurable void in Victoria BC's punk/metal music scene.

I can only write this as Aaron's little brother. Aaron was always the more social one, building friendships in the local skate scene that lasted decades. He always had the latest thrash releases in the early 80s, too, so once the back door closed as he went out with friends, I would sneak into his room and make dubs of Metallica's *Ride The Lightning*, or Slayer's *Show No Mercy*. Aaron later introduced me to other favourite thrash and punk bands, many of which Aaron remained a lifelong fan – except for Metallica (he called BS on *The Black Album* the day it was released). I think it was the honesty in music, lyrics, and production that he appreciated.



In 1989, when the thrash band I played in, Evisceration, was looking for a vocalist, Aaron nonchalantly offered to step in. He had never sung before, but it took only one song, a cover of 'Nursing Home Blues' by D.R.I., to establish his indelible presence in the band...and the punk/metal scene for the rest of his life. Aaron's metal/punk vocals improved exponentially with every jam in our backyard tin shed. We only played a single show before Aaron went on to form Severence. There he perfected a scorching metal scream that gave #24-grit sandpaper a run for its money. In 1990 when the local metal band Moral Decay began making waves with their innovative debut demo 'To Build An End,' Aaron brazenly called the opening track on the first Severence release, 'We Built The End.' It was this form of sarcasm that defined his humour and ensured he was always surrounded by laughter and love.

Aaron further cemented himself in the Victoria music scene with bands like Left of Center, Meatlocker Seven, Friday Night Murder, Gallow's End, Chokehold, and Apostacy. Most recently, he sang in Capital City Stalkers, as well as his Accused

tribute band, Psychomania. Aaron's charisma shone when he performed, whether transfixing the audience through his delivery, the friendly banter to the crowd, or taking a moment to give the finger to a low ceiling he just jumped into. It didn't matter if the audience was two hundred people or merely two; you would get the best of Aaron.

Growing up, Aaron was my protector. He stepped in front to shield me in many different ways during our childhood. Aaron's compassion, thoughtfulness, and empathy were gifts received by so many people, not in the least by his family, and those he helped as a Community Health Worker.

I write this from the perspective of Aaron's little brother, but I realize we were all his 'brothers and sisters.' The outpouring of love and grief over his passing these past few weeks illustrated just how

huge his family is. Be kind to each other, give lots of hugs when the pandemic is over, and most importantly...don't forget to laugh.

We love you, Aaron.

The party upstairs is getting pretty f**king rowdy.



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DITCHED

Written and Directed by: Christopher Donaldson

Produced by Mark Sommer

Stars: Marika Sila, Mackenzie Gray, Lindsay Robinson, Kris Loranger

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

Mark Sommer, Producer for the upcoming horror film *Ditched* (2021). I would not say I am famous but rather infamous as a former artist manager specializing in industrial rock and punk working with such industry stalwarts as SNFU and Tim Skold (Shotgun Messiah/ Marilyn Manson).

AU: How did you become involved in the film industry?

MS: Being a rare breed of person both born and raised in Vancouver, the film industry has always been close at hand. From my mom working as an extra on *21 Jump Street* and *MacGyver* in the 80s to casually running into actors as varied as Peter Faulk, Robin Williams and Henry Winkler over the years on the streets of my hometown, I have always been interested in the film industry. With some luck I ended up launching into the music industry first but always anticipated and hoped to make the switch once I figured out things

from the ground up as I always like to do.

AU: Give us the elevator pitch/synopsis for your feature film, *Ditched*?

MS: After a routine prison transfer crashes in the forest, young Inuit paramedic Melina finds herself surrounded by murderers with a mere 100 feet to climb out of a ditch to escape. When they are attacked by an unseen force in the forest, Melina's short journey to safety becomes the ultimate contest of wills.

AU: Tell us about the origin and process of producing this movie?

MS: The writer/director Christopher Donaldson is a long time friend (15+ years) who I am lucky enough to consider one of my best friends. We initially developed another project that fell apart at the last possible minute due to a complication beyond our control and after we sort of licked our wounds and regrouped we decided to work to create something more contained and harking back to the 80s in terms of a gritty, one-location horror film. And that's what you see here. Two guys pushing and pushing and not giving up and not giving up.

AU: How did you raise the funding to complete *Ditched*?

MS: A combination of private investment and contributions from provincial and federal agencies/programs.

AU: Have you produced any other movies in the past?

MS: No. but I have produced or executive produced numerous music videos for my artists that I managed and executive produced many of their records. Similar skill sets.

AU: Any other projects planned for the future?

MS: Chris and myself have something else we are setting up to shoot later this year/early next year if all goes according to plan.

AU: Practical effects or CGI?

MS: A combination of both but the vast majority were practical. There is nothing better than practical effects. Call me old school but they hit harder and better 9 times out of 10.

AU: Who directed *Ditched*? What else is on their film resume?

MS: Christopher Donaldson. He has a long history of working in the film industry and started out doing screenwriting. Lots of it is stuff that never saw the light of day or uncredited rewrites. He

of the local industrial rock scene. He put in an amazing effort on our film and the director and myself could not be happier with the end result. You have a powerfully driving synth score with some guitarish elements at times and it really powers you through the film. We have a digital soundtrack release slated for the film later this year.

AU: Has the movie been picked up for distribution? Any physical media releases in the works?

MS: Yes, multiple deals have been signed for multiple territories and expect the film to roll out over the Fall period both digitally and on Blu-ray with a festival run starting in August. The director



also had a long run as a commercial director working with numerous Fortune 500 companies. Recently he is one of the most in demand storyboard artists in Canada having recently done the boards for flicks like *Child's Play* (2019) and *A Babysitter's Guide to Monster Hunting* (2020) along with TV Shows like *The Flash*, *Supergirl*, *Legends of Tomorrow* and *Van Helsing*.

AU: Who did the film's soundtrack and how would you describe the score?

MS: Clayton Worbeck is our composer and he is someone I know from my music days. Clayton has worked with Al Jourgensen both in Revolting Cocks and also in Ministry. I met him in Vancouver back when his band Stayte was part

and myself are both big physical media fans so a release in Blu-ray format was a must for us and luckily we have a really great distributor involved who agrees with us and you can expect to see a great looking Blu-ray at some point in the fall.

AU: How do people find more info online?

MS: www.ditchedmovie.com will have all the links on where to watch once we announce our distribution partners and festival plans. Expect an announcement in early July. We are on Instagram and Facebook and the links are @ditchedmovie there as well.

www.ditchedmovie.com



CIRITH UNGOL

Forever Black

Interview with bassist Jarvis Leatherby
by Ira Hunter and Dustin Jak

AU: What are you most famous/infamous for?

JL: This is Jarvis Leatherby. I guess I'm most infamous for being the manager and bass player of *Cirith Ungol* since their resurrection in 2016 but I'm most famous for being the singer and bass player for the heavy metal band *Night Demon*.

AU: What else is on your musical resume?

JL: I have a record company called *Iron Grip Records* and I manage bands such as *Satan*, *Midnight*, and *Visigoth*. I've also been known to be the live vocalist for the new wave of British heavy metal band *Jaguar*. I live and breathe

metal 24/7.

AU: What do you know about the history and origins of the original Cirith Ungol lineup?

JL: Well the band started in '72, out of Ventura, California. They just kind of grew up reading fantasy novels and listening to proto-metal. They didn't put out their first record until 1981 with *Frost and Fire*. They were a band until '92. They made four albums during that time that were widely distributed around the world. The band never did tour, but they had a lot of press and a lot of notoriety. I think they were misunderstood back then. They have an eclectic sound, definitely ahead of their time. It's interesting, the band's going to be on their 50th year coming up after 25 years of silence from '92 to 2016, they're back here to give it another shot.

AU: How did you come to join the band?

JL: I had known some members of the band for about a decade prior. With my band *Night Demon* being from Ventura, we grew up hearing about them all the time and they were kind of always in

the background there like our local legacy. Things evolved from there and after years of convincing, I was able to persuade them to reunite.

AU: How would you describe the band's sound?

JL: I would say epic doom metal.

AU: Was it a prerequisite that you read J.R.R. Tolkien and Michael Moorcock's Elric novels?

JL: I don't think so, not to listen to the band, not at all. They were friends with Michael Whelan, who did all the artwork for that stuff. They were actually close with the Tolkien people and they were granted the rights from Tolkien to use the name like in the 70s. Long before any of this stuff was ever popular. Tolkien and Moorcock, these guys were all part of the same scene. It's an added bonus I guess if you're into that realm, but it's not specifically about that stuff. There's definitely a lot of influence in there but there's songs just straight up about Hell and the Devil, you know? So it's just a part of what *Cirith Ungol* is all about.

AU: What albums have you been on?

JL: The upcoming *Half Past Human* EP, *Forever Black*, the live album and the single *Witch's Game*.

AU: What's the Half Past Human EP?

JL: That's the new record that's coming out, four songs. Basically songs that the guys wrote in the 70s that have kind of been reimagined for today. Songs that have been unearthed, songs that people have not heard. So it's pretty cool.

AU: Forever Black, which is on Metal Blade Records, was it a concept album?

JL: Not really, it's the band's first album in 30 years. It was just basically like, let's write the best songs that we can and that was it. There's no concept behind it. We had more artwork from Michael Whelan. If anything it's kind of a post-apocalyptic theme.

It's kind of funny because the album came out right when the pandemic hit. So I guess it's a bit of foreshadowing from the band. Because pretty much what we've been going through, resembled a lot of our dystopian type themes.

AU: Who are the original members still?

JL: Tim Baker is our vocalist, he's one of the coolest guys ever. He's got a very unique voice. It's kind of cool these days that music is so extreme. Tim kind of had that thing going on in the early 80s. Greg Lindstrom the guitar player and the drummer Robert Garven, they started the band in the early 70s. Those guys are kind of the cornerstone of the band. Jim Barraza, the lead guitar player who's on *Paradise Lost*. He is probably the chief songwriter now as far as the musical elements of the band.

AU: What influenced the band to be so heavy?

JL: Early 70s rock like Deep Purple, Grand Funk, Black Sabbath. But they were listening to a lot of underground stuff too. When Rush first came to the United States they virtually had no fans and *Cirith Ungol* were some of their first friends. The same thing with Judas Priest. When these bands started coming to the States, they drew very small audiences. *Cirith Ungol* was always around and befriending bands like that.

AU: Was Ventura known more for punk rock?

JL: Yeah, but that wasn't until later. The first punk band from Ventura was a band called The Rotters. They came out in '77, they had a single called Sit On My Face Stevie Nicks that was played on the Rodney on the ROQ show. Then there was a big legacy of hardcore skate punk in the 1980s. Bands



such as Ill Repute, Dr. Know, Aggression, Stalag 13. But *Cirith Ungol* had already been formed by then and we're already running. The punk thing was definitely an afterthought. *Cirith Ungol* came first.

AU: Do you know how Cirith Ungol got their song on the Metal Massacre compilation?

JL: Yeah, they were friends with Brian Slagel from Metal Blade. Metal Blade had not existed yet. Brian worked at a record store in LA called Oz Records. The *Cirith Ungol* guys used to go in there



and buy records. Brian was just an employee there. He asked them, "Hey, I'm thinking about putting together a compilation, you think you guys would want to do it?" They said "Yeah" and gave him the song *Death Of The Sun*. I think they were the first band to be asked. They were the first thing to ever happen on Metal Blade records.

AU: Why did the band break up originally?

JL: Just nothing was happening for them. They were tired of the music industry and the way that the machine worked, they had no management. They were just disinterested with it. It just got to a point where they lost faith in the whole thing. They swore off music forever and never touched an instrument for 25 years. Then the beast had to be awoken and that's where I came in.

AU: Has there been a resurgence in Metal?

JL: Big time! Absolutely yeah. We went through a very dark period in the

90s and in the early 2000s, where if you played a guitar solo you were a grandpa. Which was totally stupid because music got dumbed down and it just became lame. Now it's been taken to a whole new level. I think there's a new appreciation for it. Rock is no longer a young man's game. People enjoy seeing the old guys up there doing it and doing it at a high level. Because it's not like where you can see the Rolling Stones up there in their 70s playing their single note songs. But to play heavy metal music and fast music and hard rock, to see guys up there in that age range doing that kind of stuff, it takes some physicality to do it. So it's very impressive.

AU: Final words for our readers?

JL: Just be yourself and follow your passion.

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CIRITH UNGOL

Half Past Human

Interview with founding member and drummer Robert Garven

by Ira "One Foot In Hell" Hunter and Dustin "Master of the Pit" Jak

AU: What are you most famous for?

This is Robert Garven, drummer of Cirith Ungol. I'm not sure I'm famous for anything to be honest. I just play. I love heavy metal and my dream my whole life was to play in a heavy metal band.

AU: Give us a history of the band?

RG: There is some discrepancy when you could say we were officially started. Tim (Baker) didn't start singing for the band until around 1980. But the origins of the band started around late 1971 or early 1972. Greg (Lindstrom) and I were very young, seventh grade, maybe 13 years old. Our first class of the day was an advanced English literature class, so they were handing out pretty difficult assignments. So we were assigned to read the Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien and that's what would lead to our long history of being influenced by sword and sorcery, literature and art. Greg would also bring albums and turn me on to music. Over time we decided, like everyone else, hey let's start a band of our own. So we got together with Jerry Fogle and Pat Galligan and we started a band called *Titanic*. After not too long we pulled out of *Titanic* and we formed Cirith Ungol. We played as many shows as we could. Then we released *The Orange Album* on tape that we sent out to a bunch of record companies. In 1981 we put out *Frost and Fire*, that was our first album. Our second album was the *King of the Dead* in 1984. In 1986 we had, *One Foot in Hell*. In 1991 we had, *Paradise Lost*. We had kind of a bad record deal on that thing and right at the same time, the whole hair metal thing was happening and we just didn't see any future forward, so the band broke up. Around 2015, a local musician, Jarvis Leatherby, talked us into getting back together and playing. So we started playing shows in 2016 and that's where we are today.

AU: How would you describe the band's sound?

RG: Everyone has a different idea of what we call True Heavy Metal. But our goal was to create really heavy music. That's what our goal is, and to this day, we're trying to stay as true to that as possible. With everything we do, that's a goal. How can we make this heavier? That's my life's goal every time I sit behind a drum set, what can we do to create heavy music?

AU: What bands influenced that heaviness?

RG: Dust, Blue Cheer, Cream, psychedelic bands, Iron Butterfly, Jimi Hendrix. That stuff is borderline heavy metal, just very early strains. Canada bands too like A Foot in Coldwater, and Rush.



AU: Should people read Tolkien and Michael Moorcock novels to really get into this music?

RG: Well not to listen to our music, but I would encourage anyone to read any of that stuff. I think the more you read expands your brain. When we were young we were reading voraciously. Greg would turn me on to different authors. There's Robert E. Howard that wrote Conan the Barbarian and Bran Mak Morn. I could list 20 or 30 different authors and artists that influenced us. The painter that did all our album covers Michael Whelan is an unbelievable artist. But even before him we liked the artists Frank Frazetta and Boris Vallejo, all these guys that we put together in the stew that our band sprung from.

AU: Were in contact with J.R.R. Tolkien to get permission to use the name Cirith Ungol?

RG: Well not him personally, but the people that had the rights to the Lord of the Rings in the U.S. gave us permission originally. We were influenced by his writing and having a more difficult name kind of helped the band gain some notoriety.

AU: What does Cirith Ungol mean?

RG: It's the name of the castle on the edge of Mordor in the Lord of the Rings. The word Ungol comes from a race of giant spider monster creatures. Cirith Ungol directly translated means Pass of the Spiders. We pronounce our name with a soft C like Sirith Ungol. In the book it's supposed to be pronounced with a K like Kirith Ungol. Even though we read the book several times, the joke is that we obviously didn't read the appendix.

AU: Any new Cirith Ungol material coming out?

RG: We have an EP coming out May 28th called *Half Past Human*, and our last studio album which was the first studio album in like 29 years, *Forever Black*, came out last year. It ended up on quite a few top 10 lists of best heavy metal albums of 2020, which blew us away. We were together for a long time before our first album came out so we had a bunch of old songs floating around. So because a lot of our fans asked for us to re-record some of our older material, we picked four of the songs that we thought we could breathe some new life into and make them really heavy.

AU: The Frost and Fire Festival that brought you back, did you guys headline that as well?

RG: Yeah, Jarvis was putting on Frost and Fire Festival, named after our first album, and wanted us to come and do a signing session. So we went and saw all the bands, and people came from all over the world. For our signing session people brought all our albums and stuff for us to sign and it just blew us away. Jarvis said "If you guys get back together, you can headline next year." A big festival in Europe, Keep It True, said the same thing. So we stepped aside and we decided well hey, we're getting older and if we're gonna play ever again let's get together and do this now. So that's how the band got back together.

AU: The band's style of vocals is very unique. Where did that originate from?

RG: A lot of the bands that I liked to listen to had kind of extreme vocals back in a day. Of course our singer Tim, his vocals compared to today's heavy metal vocals, I don't think are extreme. Back in the day we were friends with the guys in Rush and they influenced the band so we had a kind of different style than everyone else. Plus we weren't willing to fit into the mould. Whether it was the hair bands or the speed metal or whatever. We were constantly just focused on playing the metal that we considered the true heavy metal. Which was the early kind of heavy pounding drums, bass, guitar and screaming vocalists.

AU: How did you get your song on the Metal Massacre compilation, the first release from Metal Blade Records?

RG: Brian Slagel has been one of our friends from the very earliest times of the band and we consider him like a family member. He was working at a record store and we just put out *Frost and Fire* and so we're talking to Brian saying, "Our dream is to be rock stars and play in a big heavy metal band" and Brian goes, "Well, my dream is to start my own record company. I'm going to put out this compilation album would you guys be willing to record a song for it?" We said, "Sure" so we recorded the song *Death of the Sun* for his first album, *Metal Massacre*. That's coming up on its 40th anniversary this year.

AU: Did you end up on Metal Blade Records?

RG: Our third album, *One Foot In Hell* was on Metal Blade and after the band got back together we renewed our friendship with Brian and Metal Blade Records. Brian is a legend.

AU: How do you classify your type of Metal?

RG: Some people consider what we play



Traditional Metal. There's Epic Metal now where there is sword and sorcery involved. There's Doom Metal like our song *Death of the Sun*. One writer called us the Grandfather's of Doom Metal. We call it True Metal. We play the true strain of Metal.

AU: Who were some of the best heavy metal bands you guys played with back in the day?

RG: Hard to say. I would say none, because the bands we played with back in the day were bands that ended up being hair bands and stuff like that. Matter of fact it seemed totally opposite of what we were trying to achieve. But after we got to get

back together we got to meet some of the bands that we actually grew up worshipping like Lucifer's Friend, and Captain Beyond.

AU: Will you ever come up to Canada to play?

RG: I love Canada. My wife is from Canada. The music is very important for us. So yeah, I'd love to play in Canada. It's on my list of things to do. It's like a dream and I hope that dream comes true.

AU: Anything else you want to promote?

RG: Well, I just want to tell everyone to go pick up *Half Past Human*. Also Metal Blade has a video of our song, *Brutish Manchild*, on their YouTube. You can always go back and listen to our last album, *Forever Black*, there as well. Cirith Ungol has an Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. So if you need to find out what's happening with the band, you can check it out. Give some of our albums a listen, I think there's some really good material there.

facebook.com/cirithungolofficial
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Unleash The Archers

Interview with vocalist Brittney Slayes
By Erik Lindholm

Absolute Underground: Good day! Where are you now? Tell us your setting.

BS: I'm sitting in my home studio, in my apartment in Vancouver in Yaletown. Beautiful weather! Cannot complain. Let's hope it stays that way. Typical BC if it doesn't.

AU: A pressing question we've had to face in pandemic times... what is your fave takeout food of the moment? And why?

BS: Haha! That's a hard one! I've discovered so many. Probably sushi. There is a little place up the road that is smoking busy all the time and it's really good and good price. Pretty typical for a Vancouverite.

AU: Sounds like your band is getting some accolades lately... if "Juno" what I'm saying?

BS: Okay, good one, is that a dad joke? A pun...

AU: It was bad, yes. Had to be done! What has that experience been like to be tapped with that? What are some of the emotions in play for you to get nominated?

BS: It's incredible. It's such an honour. To get recognized for your art on such a huge scale, is something that means so much to us. In the metal world, you're pretty underground, you're never gonna get played on the radio. Probably not going to be recognized on the street – its not the kind of success that comes with the music anymore, maybe it did, back in the day. So its really awesome to be recognized for what you do, that you're doing a good job. It means a lot.

AU: It's an incredible achievement, and to reflect on a Victoria/Vancouver band finding that success. Have you had communications with bands outside the genre lately, since getting on national radar in a big way, and if so, what have they been expressing?

BS: Nothing really, we are still just a name on a website, really. Unless people are in the metal world, I don't think they will go out of their way



to find out who we are and what we do. I know personally, I can tell you I've looked at the list, and checked out a few of them. But I haven't sat down and listened to all the nominees. It's probably the same for most people as well. Maybe if we win something, maybe something will come of it.

AU: To reflect on that, for someone outside the genre, not familiar with the band, for someone just learning about UTA, your style, your message – from this new exposure – how would you recommend they start to understand the band? A playlist, an album, a ritual... anything. A crash course, how you approach that?

BS: I'd tell them to head over to Spotify, and listen to the albums *Apex* and *Abyss* front to back, one after the other. That's the best way I think. They are concept records, so its best to listen to them all the way through. *Abyss* is a sequel to *Apex*. It tells you a lot about us as musicians, the kind of music we like to play and where we are at right now. Our older stuff is very much influenced by those times, and who we were back then. Our new stuff is a better reflection of who are today, and the kind of music we like to write and stories we want to tell. Or! Go for the old Youtube search of "Unleash The Archers" and pick one with the highest views, or search for live videos, or watch some reaction videos too.

AU: Lots of avenues to explore! With *Apex* and *Abyss*, this is more the modern version of the band, and an older edition of the band. Can you speak to an evolution? What do you notice, as the steadfast singer in the band, as possible changes in albums from the band?

BS: Yeah, definitely a more well rounded writing style from the band, we are more direct now. We are better at... weeding out what is not necessary for the song. We write together and all have a say

in how the song turns out, as opposed to back in the day when one person would write a track and you would just go with it. Nowadays we discuss if a riff doesn't fit the tone of the song, we will all do our editing style on it, we won't let it fly. A more poignant sound and more mature as well.

AU: Love some immaturity too. It's all necessary. Thinking of that in your live sets recently, we haven't seen much lately from anyone, but you did a live show at the Rickshaw. What was the experience like there?

BS: The show we did there was the livestream, so we brought in eight cameras and two GoPros, and we filmed the whole show as if there were people in the audience. We didn't do a cozy studio session – we set up and filmed live as if there was an audience in front of us. It was a little strange, definitely, I really like looking at our audience and connecting with them, hearing them sing back, so having to looking into cameras instead of faces was very odd. Speaking to them as if they were there, but knowing they are watching on TV... it changed a lot how we interacted. It was interesting. I'm not gonna say we enjoyed it, it was cool and necessary for the time, because we did release a record in a pandemic, this was our album release session, the livestream. But it was still a lot of fun. I definitely, much much prefer doing a live show with people. There have been a lot of questions over the year like, "Do you think livestream will take over live shows?" and I say no! Certainly not.

"It's absolutely incredible to have actually won, we were up against some pretty stiff competition, true Canadian legends; it really means a lot to us! Still can't believe it's real!"

- Brittney Slayes

AU: We need the energy, the volume. I can text you #HEADBANGING over and over, you may not get the message the same way as crashing and bashing into the stage at the front row. Well here we are at the end of May 2021 doing the interview, vaccines are rolling out, the mood is shifting and lifting, after our last year of lockdowns and measures. As we come out the other side, do you see your self forming live and touring plans? What are some of your thoughts around future tours?

BS: We are gonna hit the road the second we are able. We are itching to get out of here. We have a lot of bookings, its just a question of whether they are able to go ahead. We have have North America, Europe, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, China. South America in the works. A lot of plans! These were supposed to be happening last fall, so we are ready. We announced late November/ December Europe dates, we are hoping they go through, we are not completely sure. We are just booking in hopes that we will be able to go forward.

AU: That's amazing. That's all you can do. Universal message from all the artists lately,

fingers crossed.

BS: Plan for the best, prepare for the worst.

AU: Reaching the success of Juno territory, making your start in Victoria, wondering if you can reflect a small tip to new metal singers, a reflection you have after spending time in the industry – for the people getting started.

BS: A big one is to "stick with it". Don't give up. We kept playing, booking tours, kept putting out records. We were really smart about what merch we printed, we tried to make sure we had a professional image at all times and making descisions with that in mind, creating a brand for ourselves. Just don't give up. And secondly, save your money – the industry is very expensive. If you want top quality music videos, merch, sound gear, you have to put your money where your mouth is. Be frugal!

AU: Just watched the "Abyss" video – it is 100% - great production values. Also "Faster Than Light" with a bit of comedy.

BS: We try not to take ourselves too seriously!

AU: Sometimes less invisible grapefruits and more having a fun time, its a good balance. You maintain a great balance. This interview will appear in our #100 edition of AU... somehow we made it! What is a memory you have from the start of UTA in Victoria, and crossing over with AU? What ancient memory do you have of some cross promotion?

BS: You guys covered our CD release back in 2009, when we launched *Behold the Devastation* and we felt super cool! We were excited to be in AU!

We just loved that you guys are so supportive of the Victoria scene, and distribution around the country. It's a cool way to get your band out there, not just touring, but for people to be able to read about you when not playing a show. Fave memory

though! Is definitely when we did an ad for Pizza Zone in AU! It was the best pizza, it was across from Logan's pub, so after the metal show, you go and eat pizza. They were tied together! So we approached them and said, "We love your pizza so much, can we please do an ad with you in AU?" and they were into it! So it was the band eating pizza. We found it the other day and had forgotten we did this! It was so awesome for AU to run it.

AU: Pizza and metal, what's not to like. Those are rad memories! Thanks for sharing those, we are reflecting on memories for #100.

BS: Congratulations, seriously, its an accomplishment.

AU: It's a Sunday night, we look forward to seeing you out there in the future. Last words to the metalheads?

BS: We will see you soon! Miss you.

Editors' Note: After this interview, Unleash The Archers won the Juno Award for Best Metal / Hard Music Album Of The Year. Congrats to them and up the irons!

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
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RICKY JAK

INTERVIEW BY DUSTIN JAK

PHOTOS: EUBEY PANTER

AU: Who are we talking to and what are you known for ?

My name is Ricky Long aka Ricky JaK. I am known for writing the song "Holiday in Sidney" for the 1981 punk band I was in called the CommOdes.

AU: What is your first skateboarding memory?

In 1976 me and my brother used to get babysat by Uncle Fred. The neighborhood kids had a tree fort. They wouldn't let us in the tree fort unless we rode a shopping cart down the hill. We did and survived. When we entered the tree fort the walls were covered in Playboy centerfolds, they also had a skateboard in there. They let me ride the skateboard down the hill and I ate shit.

AU: What were some spots you frequented back in the late 70s early 80s?

We skated everywhere, Mr Gambino's backyard, Mrs Gotti's tennis courts, Mr Frenchy's driveway, ohhh and Mrs Luciano's fish pond. Sometimes my mom took us to Esquimalt.

AU: What skateboarders did you look up to?

Seriously those dudes down at the Saanich SkateWave were the shit. Later on when I found a Skateboarder magazine there was a picture of Jay Smith doing a layback in a huge bowl. He was truly worth looking up too. We had no videos, only magazines.

AU: What type of music were you into? Can you describe the scene back then?

I listened to CKDA AM radio and that was

sickening. Skateboarder magazine introduced me to DEVO. Punk man!!! I took the bus downtown to Richards Records where I met Steve Snotalot from the NeOs. He talked me into buying the Sex Pistols. It cost me all my paper route money. It

was a game changer for me and the next thing I knew I was heading down to an all-age punk show. That scene was exactly what I was looking for, all the weirdos were there and the energy was crazy. Wanna slam dance anyone?

AU: You seem to be one of the early breed to blend punk with skateboarding... describe the danger involved back then.

Well this reminds me of a story. 1986 punk music was kinda over and heavy metal was starting to mix into our scene. I had just taken the corn braids out of my hair and was skateboarding down to the

Heavy Metal Massacre show. Bands like Mission of Christ, Armors, Witches Hammer and some other bands, it was an epic time in music. I finished a big bottle of red wine before the show and entered the mosh pit. I did some skateboarding in the

hall and bumped into one of the non tolerant townies. He came up to my face and told me to go outside. I exited the hall and was used as a kickboxing bag. It was bad and I had to soak my blood pillow off my face in the morning. Needless to say, I

stopped drinking that brand of red wine.

AU: Who did you like to skate with back then?

The guys who stoked me and gave me the most heckling were Harri



SHRED SESSION

Hovata, Iain Ogorman, The Beak, Grahammc4, Lunch, Pete, Terry Hilderbrant, Kenny Chow, Terry Orr, and most of all my little brother Randy Long.

AU: You are also a member of an infamous skate team... how has that helped?

I really wanted to be on the Pepsi Team but I wasn't good enough. There are many team members with the DBC patch. A horrible patch to have "Dead Brother Club". We love you Sarah JaK Clark, she just lost her brother. I have missed my little brother for 30 years and the JaKs Team almost makes up for the loss. Thank you Dustin for partitioning me and the Team for welcoming a nerd like me.

AU: Some of your favorite places to skate?

I still really enjoy skateboarding fishponds. The ones I know about are secret, I don't want anybody getting them shut down. Six Mile Skatepark is fun, let's just say the bigger the better. Don't invite me to your mini-ramp, I don't like hospitals.

AU: Who are your fave skaters these days?

Lance Mountain and Mark Gonzales. Also Rylan aka "Ham-Zits", Tyler aka "Spa. rk.s", Corey aka "shitpilecor" and River aka "young booza" ... just try to skate as hard as those wanks.

AU: What inspired you to make the rad art you are notorious for?

I always thought when you painted a picture of a bird it had to look like a bird. People would say "ohh that is an artist.". When I paint it's messy, your portrait will look like crap and your children will have cigarettes. Everyone inspires me to make art and I think everyone is an artist. Just do it. #wtfricky

AU: Who are your favorite artists??

Ray Johnson, Phyllida Barlow, Robert Rauschenberg, Cecily Brown, Frank Auerbach, Kim Dorland, and Robert Bateman "ohh that is an artist." Check these artists out, they are pretty punk in my eyes.

AU: What have you been listening to lately?

This morning's album playlist: Beirut - Gallipoli, Tremblers of Sevens - Shadow Houses, Dave Brubeck Quartet - Angel Eyes, Public Image LTD - Album and finishing off with The Rolling Stones - Black and Blue. My wife allows no Slayer

until noon.

Tonight's album playlist: Sunn O))) all 7 albums

AU: Who are your fave bands to skate to?

Your band name here.

AU: Name some crazy shows you've seen.

I have luckily just about seen every band I ever wanted to see.

My top 10 are probably:

Subhumans with Twisted Minds and Husker Du, Black Flag 3 times, Dead Kennedys, DOA, Jerk Ward with Scream from DC, NeOs, Black



Sabbath with Dio and Ozzy

Melvins first show in Victoria and their last show in Vancouver with Napalm Death.

Motorhead, Mission of Christ, and Sixbrewbantha in a basement.

Sadly I never got to see Nickleback.

AU: Any thoughts on skating in the Olympics??

Russia for the Gold.

AU: You are obviously going to be skating into your 60s. Do you have any advice or last words for our skateboarding readers out there?

If you're having problems with drugs and alcohol, ask for help. Don't die before your time. Rule 62. Shut up and skate. Love -Ricky

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Cody Wilkins

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are your talents?

CW: My name is Cody Wilkins and I dabble in tattooing, painting and have recently started my own apparel line.

AU: What shop do you work at and where is it located?

CW: I work at Scarecrow Ink Tattoo located in the beautiful British Columbia, Canada

AU: What makes Scarecrow Ink unique?

CW: I'd have to say the crew. Between our lineup and our rotating guest artists we have someone for just about any style that walks through the door.



INK SLINGERS

a script artist I have done my fair share of strange and bizarre words and sayings on people over the last 14 years.

AU: Any favourite types of music you like to listen to while working?

CW: It really depends on my moods but you can bet you will hear some UnderØath,



Bring me the Horizon, or Bear Tooth playing in our shop. I've been known to play a lot of rap/hip hop as well though. Our shop always has something good playing in Sirius XM.

AU: Any advice

for young artists just starting out?

CW: Draw, draw, draw, and draw some more. And if someone tells you you can't do something, practice some more and come back and put them in their place! Just stick with it and do your thing.

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Stratton and Michelle Stark.

AU: How long have you been an artist? How did you get started tattooing?

CW: I have been tattooing roughly 14 years now. I dropped out of high school in grade nine and after slowly stopping all homeschooling my father finally told me to get off my ass and handed me a tattoo kit, fake skin and a box of oranges and grapefruits.

AU: What was the first tattoo you received and what was the first tattoo you did on someone else?

CW: First tattoo I received was two Kanji characters on the back of my arm for my 16th birthday. And ironically the first tattoo I can think of doing was also a kanji character for "mom" on an ex girlfriend's foot.

AU: What styles would you say you specialize in?

CW: I specialize in line work, black work, mandalas and floral. I prefer whip shading and dot work (stippling) and love "sketch" and "pen and ink" styles.

AU: What are some of the major influences on your artistic style?

CW: Growing up I always followed Flaks, Big Meas, Boog (RIP) all sorts of script artists which is how I got into line work and script. Music is always a huge role in anything I do. There's ALWAYS music playing where ever I am.

AU: Does your art lean towards the side of Unicorns or Demons?

CW: Haha I think mine falls right there in between. I've tattooed unicorns and I've tattooed hot demon

babes with skulls.

AU: Do tattoos always have to have a deep



meaning or can it be solely about the art?

CW: I feel it is always better to have some sort of meaning or story behind your tattoo, but personally, no I do not believe they HAVE to. To each their own, it's their body if they want it just because it looks

badass then I am more than happy to help out

AU: Absolute Craziest Tattoo you've ever done?

CW: Hands down my own throat in the mirror at

1:30am on a work night.

But one of my favourites would have to be my first real dot work project. A full upper Norse half sleeve entirely shaded with stippling. That was one hell

of a learning process on such an easy going client. But being



AU: Who else works at Scarecrow Ink and what are their strong points artistically?

CW: Scarecrow Ink consists of Jesse Longbear, piercer and owner. Denis Noahbody who has 27 years experience and covers a wide variety of styles. Scott Weatherman is more of a softer black and grey realism and Brooke Goodwin, our newest addition, specializing in fine line and whip shaded floral pieces. We also have two regular guest artists, Randy



babes with skulls.

AU: Do tattoos always have to have a deep

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SHADOW CABINET WITH GRAYSON CALIGARI:



Hem Netjer

Interview by Grayson Caligari

How do you pronounce your Hem Netjer?

Raven: It's pronounced Hem-Nech-er. The tj is a ch sound. It's Ancient Middle Egyptian and it means gods' servant also called a priest.

Please describe your band for people who have not heard you before?

Raven: Hem Netjer is a pagan industrial music project from Vancouver, BC. We combine ancient stories and folk instruments with modern electronic dance beats.

Can you talk a bit more about the ancient stories that inspire you?

Raven: We are trying to give ancient thoughts and memories a voice using our own modern interpretation. I'm inspired by stories from Northern European Shamanism, and Ancient Middle Egyptian tales, such as The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor. In the Norse myths, they talk about the elements and how the world is connected through the balance of fire and ice.

through the balance of fire and ice.

Tell us about the song writing process?

Jesse: It's a creative endeavour. Raven writes the stories that she sings. Then Raven and David start writing the song together. It's mostly in English with our song *Anubis* being the exception and incorporates polytheistic themes and concepts. I add to it my own sounds and feelings and I find

that it just blends well and creates sounds all on their own.

How long have you been throat singing?

Jesse: I've been doing this for a couple years. The skills that the Tuvan singers have is akin to a martial art. Enrique (Soraih) is a really great throat singer.

David: I think the important part is that you get inspired by that craft and now you're finding your own way.

Raven: You're doing it in a unique way that fits in well within the project's modern context.

Can we talk a bit about the instruments you use and recording?

David: The most important part about all this is that the instrumentation still relate to the sound. The classic sounds should work with the new ones. One we want to use is the bull roarer. It is an ancient instrument that is some wood on a string; you turn the string and it makes a buzzing sound. It's been used for almost fifteen thousand years. Many people from Australia, Scandinavia and Native Americans have used it.

David: I like the idea that music is world spanning. There is also one synth the Waldorf Blofeld that has sounds that fit for us. But I like to have alternative inputs, I mean it's a computer you can do what you want.

What can we expect when you play live?

David: I like sitting around the fire and someone is playing the guitar or just a drum, it's very natural. So I have been working on bringing that natural feeling to the live performance. I have an instrument that is a finger strap you can operate by gestures and tapping. I'm using it in the Otherworld music video. So even though it's a midi controller it's still really important to what comes out. Anybody who has seen Author and Punisher knows that.

What are the plans for Hem Netjer?

Raven: We're working on a full length album right



now. We are recording vocals and instruments in June. I hope people will hear that we are trying to tell stories. We are combining folk, tribal, pagan sounds and themes with electronic synths, bass and drum lines to reach into the primal side of everyone.

What Languages should we expect on the next album?

Raven: It's all in English but the way Jesse does his throat singing really sounds like his own language. When we combine that with the baselines it makes it sound more ethereal. There's one song that I describe as "We're in Victorian London and we just summoned Cthulhu." Not all the songs follow a traditional verse chorus verse structure. Currently *Anubis* off the *Kemet EP* is the only one in Ancient Middle Egyptian.

hemnetjer.bandcamp.com

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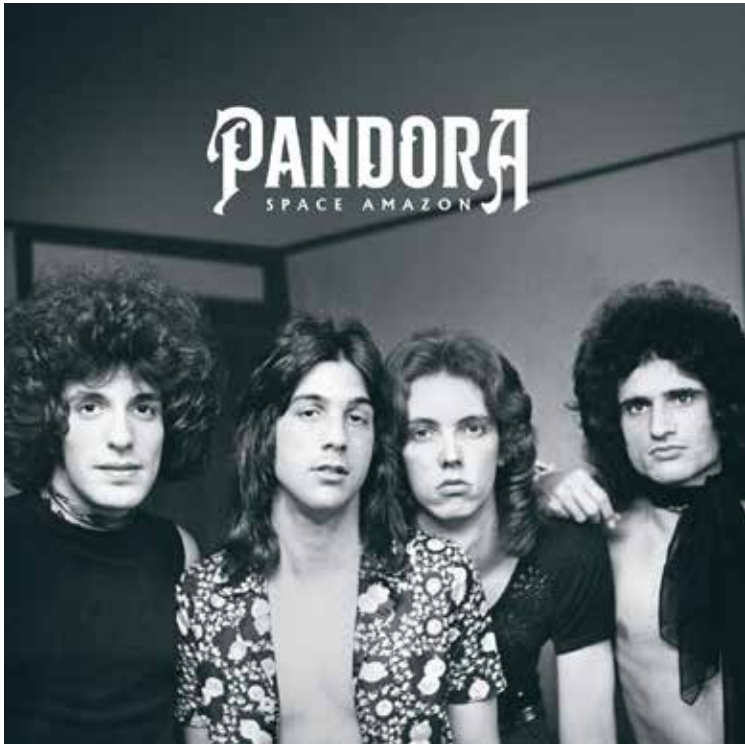
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PANDORA

**New York City's Mysterious Lost & Found
Hard Rock / Protopunk Masterpiece From 1974**

**Interview with Ric Prince (vocals) and
Martin John Butler (guitar)**

by Klemen Breznikar.

Can you elaborate the formation of Pandora?

Ric Prince: Staten Island was a hub for great musicians. I made friends with some of the musicians out there, and played a few gigs. Along the way I met drummer Frankie LaRocka on the Staten Island Ferry. The ferry in those days was a place to hang out, meet girls and drink heavily. Frankie was one of those guys who was very approachable. We struck up a conversation about music and exchanged phone numbers. We both loved British rock. I would go to see him play with his band Fantasy.

I had a bunch of songs that needed a band. Frankie recruited bass player John "Buzz" Verno and we started to form what would be Pandora. I procured a rehearsal space in Brooklyn to audition a guitar player and placed an ad in the Village Voice. Martin Butler shows up and off we go. He was a perfect fit. Motivated and ready to play. The chemistry was instantaneous. The bass and drums were like thunder and Martin's guitar was like lightning and I was the Voice of God. Perfect.

What influenced the band's sound?

Martin John Butler: Besides all the childhood influences, being from New York, we were well aware of the Velvet Underground and the New York Dolls. David Bowie was the biggest thing in the music business then and Roxy Music were going places no band had gone before. Having absorbed the British sound of The Beatles, Stones, The Who, Cream, Led Zeppelin, Traffic and others, Pandora wanted to create music that reached both that massive audience and the new Glam/Proto Punk audience. It wasn't a calculated

thing though, we naturally brought all those influences with us. We rarely spoke about it, we just played that way.

What were the influences and inspirations for the songs?

Ric Prince: The world the flesh and the devil.

The recordings were found by Granicus guitarist Al Pinell. Granicus drummer Joe Battaglia produced the live-to-four-track demo. Tell us more about the Granicus connection.

Ric Prince: Both Pandora and

Granicus had the same manager, George Frieje. George thought it expedient to enlist drummer Joe Battaglia of Granicus as producer for the recording. After George disappeared, Pandora's flexi's were left behind in Granicus guitarist Al Pinell's office drawer for 18 years as I understand it.

Martin John Butler: Pandora was just a memory when a Flexi disc that our manager made to promote us to record companies was found in a desk decades later. That began a long journey that eventually resulted in the album release. Decades later, the demo was brought to the attention of indie label Arf! Arf! Records. Doug Sheppard, the man who wrote the CD liner notes was instrumental in getting it released. They tried to find us, but hit a dead end. So they issued a limited edition of our demo on CD, with a cartoon drawing of the band as the cover. David Fricke, the senior editor at Rolling Stone raved about it in one of his articles, but we didn't learn of it until many years later. Pandora gained a cult following online and that inspired some record companies to inquire about a vinyl release. We chose Jason Flower at Supreme Echo because he had a lot of experience with vintage releases and was a great fan of the band.

Why wasn't Pandora material released in it's time?

Ric Prince: The material was not released in it's time because the ship hit an iceberg. We were bloated with ego and flying so high that we didn't notice that our manager and false prophet Mr. George Freije of Quintessence Management fame had disappeared. Mouths agape we were left at the altar. No record deal. Someone turned the lights on and we all scattered. Buzz and Frank went off to Cherry Vanilla I think, Martin and I consoled each other for a while, he found The Demons and I joined Twisted Sister. All was forgotten. The tapes just sat in the drawer. I received a phone call in 2014 and was told of our

legendary status. Hello!!!

What can you tell me about the material that will appear on 'Space Amazon'?

Ric Prince: No one else was doing what we were doing. In a way it was ahead of its time. It was encapsulated in hard rock and glam, but it was much more than that. It was Art Rock and Proto punk. Politically perverse. It was full of poetry and posturing. Guttural and rank. The band on full attack. Symphonic with discord. Zeppelin, T Rex and Bowie. Madness, narcissism, androgyny and macho angst. Exaltation and desperation. Supersized emotion coating the relentless musical energy. Primal screams fired from a canon. It was all there. Wasn't it? One thing we were not was a New York City garage band.

Are you excited about the Supreme Echo release of your old material?

Ric Prince: Yes, very much excited!

Martin John Butler: I'm thrilled by the vinyl release. The remaster sounds great, the booklet, liner notes, bonus 7" record and photos are



impeccably well done, thanks to Jason Flower's tireless efforts. For Pandora's music to have survived as a testament to a great band that was lost in time to me is a minor miracle. I'm grateful for all the music lovers and writers whose efforts brought it to light.

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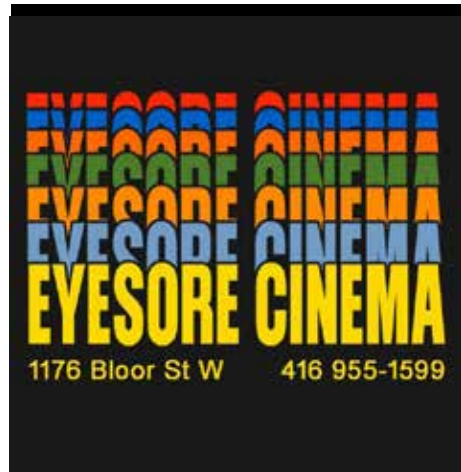
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Eyesore Cinema Surviving the Internet

By Sacha Kingston-Wayne

Daniel Hanna's Eyesore Cinema proves that a video store can still exist in the age of streaming. Daniel Hanna can still recall something that happened in 2008, shortly after Eyesore Cinema first opened. Three guys, probably in their mid-20s, walked into the store and started laughing among themselves.

One of them pointed to a shelf of DVDs, then turned to Hanna and said, "Hey bro, you know you can get these on the internet, right?"

Hanna's response: "Get the f*** out of my store, a*****."

Running a video store was nothing new for Hanna. He managed Suspect Video for years, up until the storefront burned down in a massive fire. Later that year, Eyesore Cinema was born.

Hanna says the void left by Suspect Video closing, as well as a disillusionment with the world at large, inspired him to open Eyesore. "If I live in a

world which isn't going to give me community, I'm going to create one. Stores like this, traditionally, have always been a hub."

In the 1970s, there were many video stores in Toronto. Now there are only two remaining. Eyesore Cinema is one of them.

It's a Saturday afternoon and Hanna is running late for our interview. A volunteer at Eyesore Cinema, a drag performer who goes by Weird Alice, is putting together gift bags for those who have bought tickets to an online film screening and drag performance they're putting on. Alice says that they would offer to call Hanna and ask when he's planning on showing up, but Hanna doesn't own a cellphone. Hanna's choice not to own a cellphone is driven by spite for a world that demands instant gratification.

"This idea that we have to be in constant availability to everybody is frightening. Everyone feels entitled to message you at any given time and expects you to answer immediately."

When Hanna arrives, he says he's sorry for being late, and adds that anyone who makes plans with him should show up about

15 minutes later than they agreed to meet. Alice asks if he remembered to print something off for them. He admits to forgetting, and says he's sorry to them as well. Hanna's only been at the store for about a minute, and he's already had to make two apologies.



Eyesore Cinema is a small store, located about two blocks west of Dufferin station. A pleasantly musty smell hangs in the air. The walls are decorated with posters for horror flicks such as *Critters* and David Cronenberg's *Rabid*. If you want to donate old VHS tapes, you can put them in one of two cardboard boxes conveniently located next

to the cash.

There's a 40-seat theatre in the backroom, which is closed until it is safe for filmgoers to safely gather indoors again. For now, Eyesore is hosting online screenings on a Facebook page called "Eyesore Cinema Screening Collective."



Eyesore Cinema receives shipments of new DVDs and Blu-Rays every week. These deliveries consist mainly of highlights from the Criterion Collection (the celebrated distributor of "important classic and contemporary films") and reissues of cult-favourite horror movies. The group of customers who pre-order these releases is small but loyal. According to Hanna, he received over 50 pre-orders for *Psycho Goreman*, a recently released film about two kids who "resurrect an ancient alien overlord." That enthusiasm is a large part of what keeps a small operation like Eyesore alive.

Alex MacLeod, a regular customer at Eyesore, says he started renting there because it had films he couldn't find anywhere else. "Eyesore is where

I started finding all the weird and wonderful alternative movies that you couldn't find at Blockbuster Video or Rogers."



One of the reasons MacLeod keeps coming back to Eyesore is because he enjoys talking to Hanna. "Daniel is definitely a character. He's eccentric, but in a good way. He's entertaining, he's not offensive, he's not creepy, he's just funny and full of info."

"There will always be people who want to go to a store, who will want to flip through titles, who will want to discover things in that kind of tangible, practical way...there's just not very many of them because the majority of people are stupid, idiotic, motherf***ing sheep who just react to whatever's put in front of them," says Hanna.

Another regular, Dempsey Kukko-Pulkkinen, feels that it's been increasingly important to support the store since the start of the pandemic. "When you're stuck in your house and only watching the same seven things over and over and running out of stuff which piques your interest on streaming services, renting from Eyesore contributes to a healthy media diet."

In Hanna's mind, new technology streaming services – smartphones and the internet as a whole, has a mostly negative effect on the world, and he's not afraid to rant and rave about it. He refers to the internet as "hands down, the single



worst thing to happen to society, ever, outside of natural disasters and plagues" and "probably the worst man-made societal disaster in history."

Hanna longs for a world that is more community-oriented. "I want people to live in communities which give a f*** about them. I'd like to see communities sticking up for worthwhile things. I'd like to see food sovereignty. I'd like to see water not being privatized."

Hanna is able to justify using Facebook to promote Eyesore Cinema. He knows that, for many people, if you don't have a web presence, you don't exist. For him, Facebook is a necessary evil.

Despite Hanna's (gradual, stubborn) willingness to adapt, Eyesore is still struggling to keep the lights on. After Hanna pays the rent at the end of the month, his bank account is back at zero and he starts all over again. Every penny goes back into keeping the doors open, whether it's paying the suppliers or the hydro bill or property taxes.

Eyesore Cinema's community of customers is a large part of why Hanna is still motivated to keep the store going. At the beginning of the pandemic, he wasn't sure what to expect for his business, and was pleasantly surprised.

"I had no idea what was going to happen when we were locked down and was blown away that so many people came by to support us. People were like, 'You're going to get murdered, let me rent 60 movies. Sell me some T-shirts.' We survived due to community support."

The other reason Hanna refuses to give up is that he loves sounding off about movies all day. He tears apart David Lynch's "self-indulgent art twaddle" and especially hates Lynch's *Eraserhead*, which he refers to as "the most overrated student film I've ever seen."

Even though he loves running Eyesore Cinema, Hanna is aware of his tendency to gripe about almost everything else. "Sometimes I find it easier to complain about things I don't like than to praise things that I do."

Eyesore Cinema is located at 1176 Bloor St. W. in Toronto, Ontario.

www.eyesorecinema.com

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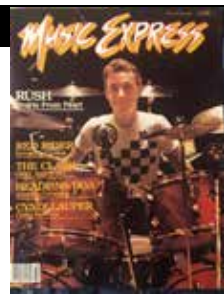
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BLAST FROM THE PAST

CELEBRATING 100 ISSUES OF ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND MAGAZINE.

By Clark Mantei

CELEBRATING 100 ISSUES OF ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND MAGAZINE.

By Clark Mantei

Hello everyone. Today in a celebratory write-up for Blast From The Past, I welcome you to issue 100 (that's right 100) of Absolute Underground. AU is a bi-monthly magazine that started up in Victoria, BC in 2004 as a way to support and bring attention and awareness to local underground performers that were vibrant in the city. The scene finally had exposure for its wide array of Punk, Metal, and Hardcore bands with a publication that debuted in December 2004 when issue #1 was released. Now in the 17th year of printing, Absolute Underground has remained a staple for today's culture of local talents.

Working with a core group of friends who helped him create this dream, publisher Ira Hunter claims he doesn't do it for his 'Health or Wealth' either. He does it for the 'Cause' of letting local bands and artists in cities across Canada have easy access to a magazine that lets them be known about. It advertises as well for many small businesses to let everyone know they exist. From tattoo shops and comic-cons to burlesque events and festivals of many kinds. Anything that didn't have a voice now had Absolute Underground; a 'Zine' designed to stay current with various cities and local happenings across the country.

Ira Hunter is the creator and also editor-in-chief.

In 1993 he moved upon graduation from Nanaimo to Victoria, BC. Then in 1999 Ira began working on two comic book publications. One was called *Champions of Hell* (currently working on issue 13) and another was the *Zombie Jesus* graphic novel.

Ira was reviewing for a Vancouver publication called "The Nerve" which one issue omitted his review with gave him the gumption to create his own maga'Zine'. While skateboarding with a friend's group whose motto was Absolute Music one of them said "Absolute Underground?" and voilà the name was born. His buddy Willy Jak and local graphic designer Bill Code went to task with volunteer writers and photographers to create issue one. Along the way a team of editors and designers and writers all set out to put the unheard of local talent into print. Bands featured came from local clubs in Vancouver like *The Cobalt*, and Victoria had *Logan's Pub* or *Lucky Bar* as solid venues for bands to showcase their talents. If you were on stage chances are Ira was in the audience to offer you a chance for exposure.'

One day a friend brought me to Ira's house, and once he learned of my 40 plus year autograph collection, he offered me my own column. He

called it 'Blast From The Past' as a way to focus on bands from waaaaay back in time, with a go ahead to interview and review. My first adventure and article was on Canada's longest surviving Rock'N'Roll band The Stampeders, and boy was this great. We travelled to Duncan to go and interview their drummer which for me was nothing short of surreal. That was over 3 years ago and it's been a wonderful experience. Sometimes



I actually meet the deadline too!

To celebrate the longevity of AU magazine's 17 plus years I decided to honour issue 100 by shedding some light upon the past history of Fanzines and Newspapers, books and programs and special editions or first editions of the 20th and 21st century. Magazines have been a staple in my life and I've enjoyed collecting them since I was in grade 4 in 1976. 45 years on I live in a vault of thousands of music publications from around the globe and I'm still collecting today. Meeting Ira was like meeting a kindred spirit who truly had a grasp on over 2 decades of culture in print. All the way up until Covid stopped us all... yet it never stopped Ira from keeping his magazine alive and we should all thank him and his team for this. I even have almost every issue of AU (still missing #2) and I'm honoured to open every current issue and read what else goes on in Canada. Not to

forget the past history unearthed by merely going through the past issues (which are online btw at www.absoluteunderground.ca)

This has been a cool way to retain Canada's underground local underground scene and culture to host the events into history.

So much of our culture and history is found in our community newspapers and local monthly magazines. Major events always made the cover of local newspapers. Those events inspired many songs too. Like when Buddy Holly's plane crashed a local paperboy named Don McLean ended up writing the song *American Pie* "The day the music died." Man landing on the moon boosted David Bowie's "Space Oddity" to the top of the charts and Marilyn Monroe's death, made Elton John and Bernie Taupin write "Candle in the Wind" just to

name a few. Rolling Stone came out in November 1967 as The Beatles were in full bloom with John Lennon on the front page.

Rock'N'Roll got it's kick when Elvis hit the scene. Then The Beatles came along to cheer everyone up after the assassination of JFK. John Lennon sadly had the same fate and that was a cover story too...

As the years go by these publications come and go and I hope to one day create a museum for all these racks and stacks of issues. .

Many publications are a thing of the past. Recently Mad Magazine ended after decades of issues and I miss the last page fold together fun.

I come from a time in the 60s through the 80s when we didn't have access to Google, Wikipedia, YouTube or the internet, and one of my life's greatest pleasures was going down to the local corner store or a newspaper stand to see who was on the cover of my favorite magazines. While a lot of folks collected car or golf magazines etc, I stayed with the music and art culture. If you wanted to join a band you could advertise in the back pages of these magazines. Where would KISS be if Peter Criss had not advertised in Rolling Stone?

Paul Stanley of KISS once sang "She's a dancer, a romancer. I'm a Capricorn and she's a Cancer. She saw my picture in a music magazine." Or when Neil Young sang "Send me a cheeseburger and a new Rolling Stone." or everyone's fave ""Wanna see my smilin' face... On the cover of the Rollin' Stone."

I have a couple friends myself who have created magic in the pages of these wonderful music 'Zines' like Gerald Rothberg who made the *Hullabaloo Magazine* and turned it into *CIRCUS Magazine* in Oct 1968 (Jimi Hendrix graced the cover.) Gerald discovered Mark Weiss, a photographer from NYC, who was published in Circus and now has released a book on all his photos of Metal bands from the 80s. His new book is titled "The Decade That Rocked". Or Robert Duncan who published paperbacks on KISS and was the editor for *Creem Magazine* and *Hit Parader* too. He also penned the term Punk Rock and even introduced the fellows who made the band The Clash. And photographers like Bob Gruen and Fin Costello too. These people needed these publications to let the public get a glimpse



backstage or on the road, and onstage to keep us up to date with Bowie, the Ramones, Kiss, Alice Cooper and the list goes on. I'm personally proud to have Absolute Underground in my life... I feel I've only just begun to let the readers know about

so many past experiences, and I feel proud when I see my name in print...

Where would comics and movies have been without Stan Lee and Marvel Comics. Or sneaking a peak-a-boo at boobs if Hugh Hefner didn't make it ok... Hot Rod mags and sports 'zines' etc.

Now one thing is for certain locally, and that's that if your band is doing a show in a local venue all you have to do is let Absolute Underground know and you can have the magazine's support. Maybe you'll even see your band's or event's name on the cover.

In 1976 I became a paperboy with a few routes and most of my money went to magazines and 8 tracks or albums and 45 years later it's nice to realize how much work and effort from everyone goes into each magazine.

I'm honoured to be a part of this fantastic 'Zine' and I hope to live on to collect all 200 issues as well. Only 100 to go.

Issue 101 comes out this August. Take care everyone.

Until we read again. Rock out and Roll on.

- Clark 'Super' Mantei

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100 ISSUES OF ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND



100 Issues of Absolute Underground



RYAN DYER

Who are we talking to and what is your involvement with *Absolute Underground* magazine?

This is Ryan Dyer. I started writing for AU around issue 8, being a part of the "second wave" of writers when AU first started expanding. I was then the music editor for a while. Now, since moving abroad, I have been taking care of the Absolute Asia articles - really, I want to and have always wanted to cover things nobody else does in the magazine or any other magazine.

When did you first come across the magazine and what made you want to get involved with the publication?

The magazine is a safe haven if you are interested in writing about some off-kilter subjects which wouldn't be accepted in any old regular music magazine. The word "underground" is a big umbrella - it covers music, film and art - and it's all accepted in AU. This is what attracted me to it.

What do you think makes this magazine unique?

In AU, there is a true sense of freedom. There is no censorship - but each writer is smart enough to not write anything which would make people scratch their heads. Each article is a passion piece by someone who really wanted to write it. They weren't told to write about the hip new trendy band by an editor and then did it begrudgingly - this is why every page in AU feels like it has a pulse.

How have you seen *Absolute Underground* grow over the years?

From black and white to colored and glossy. From being distributed to places only in Western Canada to being a Canada-wide publication. From mainly local bands covered to festivals around the world presented within its pages.

Why do you think publications like this are important?

Artists or bands who are just starting out need all the press they can get. It's hard to convince a big publication to do a feature on a band in your hometown who have only done a few shows - even if you can see they'll be the next big thing. Publications like this provide pivotal steps in promoting things, while also giving the writers experience and exposure.

What are some highlights so far for you? Your favorite AU moments?

AU has been a vessel for me to experience some really wonderful things. My first big interview was with King Diamond and I remember being quite nervous, but he was so sweet. Because of AU, I was able to cover huge concerts like Judas Priest,

Rammstein and more recently, the Download Festival in Japan. My favorite interview was with AI Jourgensen.

How can *Absolute Underground* get even better in your opinion?

If they published monthly, I wouldn't have to wait so long for my articles to see the light of day!

What do you see for the future?

If AU turned its focus to more web-based articles, it could see a lot of potential growth as far as gaining online followers. This is hard work though - those guys at Metalsucks and Metalinjection have to post about 10 articles per day - this includes editing and dealing with any backlash from the posts.

Last words for AU readers out there.

Just do it. Apologize later.



was a sudden void of publications like this and I wanted to keep the tradition alive.

What do you think makes this magazine unique?

We give underground bands exposure that other larger publications usually just ignore. I like to think of *Absolute Underground* as a time capsule of bands that have come and gone. We keep them alive within our pages. We don't censor

our content or writers, and provide many first time writers and photographers a chance to have their work published. The things we focus on are the things we are stoked on, and we hope our enthusiasm for all these rad things becomes infectious and spreads.

How have you seen *Absolute Underground* grow over the years?

What started as a little 16 page black and white mag in Dec 2004 (our To Hell With Christmas Halloween Special) has grown to be upwards of over 80 pages full colour glossy. Our original distribution was pretty much

Victoria and Vancouver. Now the magazine is distributed across Canada as far as Montreal.

Through thick and thin we have kept this train a rockin', I've said many times, I don't do this for my health or wealth, I do it for the cause. We strive to help shed a beacon of light on the best bands you haven't heard yet. This magazine is here to help the next generation of mutants jamming in their basements get the support and exposure they deserve.

Why do you think publications like this are important?

Uncensored underground media that is not controlled by corporate influence is important for an uncorrupted view of the world. We call it like we see it - if we think something is awesome we will let you know, and at the same

time if something really sucks we will let you know that as well. Print is important because it will still be here even after the magnetic poles shift and digital everything is erased into oblivion.

What are some highlights so far for you? Your favorite AU moments?

We won a Monday Magazine award for best local publication in our first year so that was pretty cool. They never did have that category again tho... hmmm.

Our main focus was and still is underground and underexposed bands across Canada but over the years we have also snagged some killer interviews

with some of the biggest names in the music and film industry like Alice Cooper, King Diamond, Bruce Campbell, Cheech and Chong, Danzig, John Waters, Lemmy, Slayer, Trailer Park Boys, Manowar, Megadeth, Doug Bradley, Robert Englund, Descendents, Dee Snider, Gene Simmons, Grim Reaper, a couple of Sex

Pistols, members of The Damned, etc... Getting to attend and cover giant festivals and events like Wacken, Hellfest, Graspop, SXSW, Riot Fest, Calgary Horror Con, 70000 Tons of Metal, Whistler



IRA HUNTER

Who are we talking to and what is your involvement with *Absolute Underground* magazine?

This is Ira Hunter, editor-in-chief and publisher. I work hard every issue to keep this chaotic kayak afloat, and do my best to come up with wicked content ideas to keep our readers engaged and on their toes. You never know what I might pull out of my arsenal. I have a blast interviewing all the cool and interesting people we feature. I also make sure to help promote underground bands across Canada every issue, that has been the magazine's mission since day one.

When did you first come across the magazine and what made you want to get involved with the publication?

After moving from Nanaimo, BC to Victoria in 1993, I instantly immersed myself in the much larger local music scene. Then one fateful day in 2004, I sat on Willy Jak's couch and it all began. The idea had been germinating in my head for a long time. I wanted to publish a music magazine to express how stoked I was on the local punk, metal, and hardcore scene we had going in Victoria. We brainstormed some ideas for a music, tattoo, horror, skate mag and our buddy Merlin helped work his magic and we conjured up the name that said it all... ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND.

Publishing is in my blood and I had already been writing and self-publishing my horror comic book series, *Champions of Hell*, since 1999. By 2004 I really wanted to publish a music related 'zine as well. Early inspirations were the old school metal mags like *Creem* and *Hit Parader*. I also used to write for *The Nerve* magazine out of Vancouver, and I loved and collected Victoria 'zines like *Eraflow Newz*, *Phat magazine*, *Magic Teeth*, and *Mystery Meat*. There




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Ski & Snowboard Festival, Rebellion Fest, and Punk Rock Bowling has also been one of the wicked perks of running this magazine.

Starting up Absolute Underground Records was pretty sweet as well. We put out 13 band releases on CD, 1 vinyl release, and 1 compilation album in the one year of its existence. I'm glad we were able to help preserve and promote some wicked bands like The Role Models, Brady's Problem, Keg Killers, A.W.T., Lust Boys, Mr. Plow, L.F.M., Growler, The Mutated Earthlings, L.I.D., The Stockers, Left Pocket Dead, Archon Legion, and Frostbacks.

Another highlight of debauchery was the Rising Scum Fest music festival we put on for five years featuring suck killer bands as Archspire, Guttermouth, Swingin' Utters, The Jolts, Torrefy, PowerClown, Class of 1984, The Hoosegow, West of Hell, Pervcore, Unleash The Archers, Mendoza, The Bonitos, Dayglos, Scimitar, Gnar Gnars, and S.N.F.U.

Taking our content to the next level we started doing video interviews which created Absolute Underground TV, which was monthly half hour episodes focused on all things music, horror, tattoo, and skateboarding related. The AUTV crew created some epic content featuring GWAR, 3 Inches of Blood, Twisted Sister, Anthrax, Exodus, Death By Stereo, Municipal Waste, Nomeansno, High On Fire, Thor, Fubar's Deaner, Overkill, Start with the Cobra, Andrew W.K., Jello Biafra, The Creepshow, D.O.A., Anvil, Death Angel, Rebel Spell, Steel Panther, and Motörhead.

How can Absolute Underground get even better in your opinion?

I think we need help with grant writing to make sure the people involved can actually get paid for once. So far this has really been a labour of love/passion project. *Absolute Underground* for the most part is a volunteer run publication and we couldn't do it without the numerous writers and photographers who share our passion. We also couldn't stay alive without all our awesome advertisers and their continued support. It is beyond appreciated!

What do you see for the future?

We want to be the last print mag on Earth - just *Absolute Underground* and the cockroaches will survive.

Last words for AU readers out there.

Epic thanks to all our readers, advertisers, content providers, transcribers, and anyone who ever lent a hand dropping off magazines in a raging blizzard. Big-ups to the Absolute production crew of Chadsolute, Demonika, Mark, and Willow for all their efforts to get the mag to print every issue. This is a magazine by the people, for the people. Create your own reality, you can't kill a dream. 100 issues is a legendary milestone for the ages - 17 years of awesomeness so far! Having a blast - no regrets. Can't wait to see you all in the mosh pit. All The Beast!
Rockner

NARDWUAR



"Absolute Underground cares about and gives exposure to things that normally slip under the radar, including me! I am forever grateful for the support your fine print mag has given to my various ventures over the years ! Doot doola doot doo ..."

MARK PYE



Who are we talking to and what is your involvement with Absolute Underground magazine?

Hey It's Marky Mark and the fucked up bunch! Just kidding. Nobody ever calls me that. Anymore. My name is Mark Pye and I create some of the ads in A.U.

When did you first come across the magazine and what made you want to get involved with the publication?

I can't remember when I first came across a copy of A.U. magazine, but it was a god damn revelation. I mean come on, Tattoo/Music/Horror/Skate/Art? What a magical magazine! I spent a lot of time living in smaller communities that had limited access to such media, so I was always stoked when I visited the coast and was able to get my hands on a copy and see what was happening. When I moved to the home of A.U. 4 years ago, I immediately knew I had to get involved and help make this unique Canadian publication look even better. It's been really great working on the team with Ira and his crew of dedicated adversaries.

How have you seen Absolute Underground grow over the years?

It's been like watching a grotesque baby grow into a full size monster. From the small beginnings of a crude black and white zine, it has truly transformed into a professional publication. Now in colour!

Why do you think publications like this are important?

Underground publications such as this one are so vital to the scene. They keep people connected and immersed. They inspire and inform people in a way mainstream media can never do.

How can Absolute Underground get even better in your opinion?

Keep pushing forward hard and heavy, give the people what they want and A.U. magazine will continue to strive.

What do you see for the future?

Despite the many atrocities that humankind has done and continues to do, I feel optimistic that there could be hope for us yet. Oh, were you talking about the magazine's future? Either way, the show must go on.

Last words for AU readers out there.

Hold strong. Hold true. Support local & be fuckin nice!

BILLY HOPELESS



Who are we talking to and what is your involvement with Absolute Underground magazine?

Billy Hopeless as a journalist I'd like to plead the fifth as stated in journalistic sources protection act sc.2017,c.22

When did you first come across the magazine and what made you want to get involved with the publication?

When this rag began I was writing for another paper and Ira took me out for dinner and offered me a really good pay scale for my services making me swear not to tell the other writers that he was paying me.

What makes Absolute Underground different from other magazines?

It's got my column and they don't, plus it pays really well.

How have you seen Absolute Underground grow over the years?

Yes when it first started it was so skinny it was like a pamphlet and Ira said hey bro you want to write for my magazine, and I said brochure?

Why do you think publications like this are important?

They cover the shit that fucking doesn't get an

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cat's assholes worth of motherfucking attention without censoring the writers' fucking vocabulary.

What are some highlights so far for you? Your favorite AU moments?

Waking up spooning with Chris Walsh on a soiled mattress covered in cigarette butts, unknown human hair, and broken glass in Hoon's basement after playing Rising Scum Fest.

How can *Absolute Underground* get even better in your opinion?

I could use a raise.

What do you see for the future?

Hover bikes.

Last words for AU readers out there.

Yes, here's a few choice words... about... Sex.

wendythirteen



Who are we talking to and what is your involvement with *Absolute Underground* magazine?

wendythirteen. Paused and Loafing writer, promoter, door gal, hermit and heart patient.

When did you first come across the magazine and what made you want to get involved with the publication?

Day 1, Cobes was an original advertiser.



What do you think makes this magazine unique?

Free, consistent underground content.

How have you seen *Absolute Underground* grow over the years?

Spread across Canada like the plague.

Do you think publications like this are important?

Indeed. Subculture represent.

What are some highlights so far for you?

Deadline stress and answering these yearly quizzes.

What do you see for the future?

Hopefully cautious sane and vaccinated peeps gig again ASAP.

Last words for AU readers out there.

WEAR A MASK. GET VACCINATED YOU PLAGUE LEMMINGS. gawd I miss shows.

DUSTIN JAK



Who are you and what is your involvement with *Absolute Underground* magazine?

This is Dustin Jak, I have been writing and doing interviews and causing a general ruckus with the magazine since it's inception under different aliases... P. Ness... Beau-Gnar... Gilligan... Rentsnorter... Yoko Hitler... Jak Maniac... Dustin Jak... Dustin Schwam.

When did you first come across the magazine?

I first used the magazine to roll drugs back when it was illegal to get high

What makes this magazine unique?

This magazine is unique because it covers a specific type of music and underground artwork scene that was previously neglected in the City and elsewhere.

How has *Absolute Underground* grown?

I have watched *Absolute Underground* grow from a small magazine to a pretty big publication with interviews from all over the world featuring different bands, different artists, athletes, movie directors, actors, sleaze bags, and general losers. Also covering major events from Riot Fest to the Heavy Metal Cruise to Las Vegas Punk Rock Bowling. Hell Fest and the notorious Jaks Team parties.

Why are publications like this important?

Publications like this are important because it

needs to get the Underground Music as well as the art scene to the general public and to people that want to read about it... We have a pretty welcome spot for skateboarders too here.

What are some AU highlights so far for you?

My highlights are always hanging out with the *Absolute Underground* crew at tattoo conventions or at concerts or any kind of event like

that... I liked interviewing Jerry A. from Poison Idea or Jack from T.S.O.L. or Jayne County or Casey Royer and metal bands like Accept or Raven... there's been tons over the years.

The Keg Killers interview on *Absolute Underground* TV right after I got out of jail was one of my highlights as well. I miss the TV channel.

How can *Absolute Underground* get better?

Absolute Underground doesn't have to worry about getting better, it just keeps getting better.

What do you see for the future?

For the future I see some pretty violent shows cuz people have been cooped up for so long but it's going to be fun to get out. At this point I'll go watch jazz. I can't wait to play and see people fighting in the circle pits... good clean violence!!! So yeah, can't wait to get out and play and hang out and get arrested.

Last words for AU readers out there.

Last Words... Punk's Not Dead.

ERIK LINDHOLM



Who are we talking to and what is your involvement with *Absolute Underground* magazine?

Erik, writer and photographer for AU. Metal and punk coverage!

When did you first come across the magazine and what made you want to get involved with the publication?



At the start, it was a photocopied newsletter, gig listings, around 2003? It was a good idea to consolidate all the shows in one spot. Then it went to black and white newsprint and started cropping up in more places. I met Ira at a show and and put something together for an early one, #2 I believe? 2004? Was writing for the local college paper at time as well, this was an opportunity to explore music and culture more.

What do you think makes this magazine unique?

Gives voice to small bands, businesses, new and upcoming art... because it touches tattoos, skateboarding, metal, punk, movies, books, painting, bars, and so on – there is lots of crossover. We are based in Canada. The readership is diverse. A single copy of the magazine can reach a lot of people in the couple months it sits on a coffee table. And its free! So if someone takes it, makes a paper airplane with it, lights a campfire with it, makes a collage – it's free – no worries mate.

How have you seen *Absolute Underground* grow over the years?

Well, it started as photocopied sheets, then newsprint, then full colour. Website .pdf are around too. There was the store too! All along, the articles have changed and evolved, contributors come and go. People have found their niche with it, and their corner, their voice. It is really quite special that way, some people might pick it up just for the horror movie reviews, another for the punk interviews, another for the gig listings...

Why do you think publications like this are important?

They record the state and outlook of the day, who was playing where, and what is going on. Think back on all the venues that have left, bands, people, and so on – these stories, memories, history are recorded in magazines such as this.

What are some highlights so far for you? Your favorite AU moments?

I remember our first big Europe trip in 2008 to Wacken, Germany for Wacken Open Air. We had applied for press coverage, I'd wrote a short promo article for the festival... and it was granted! We were stoked! Planned the trip, flew over, arrived, getting accredited...

Ira and I getting our bearings in the media tent,

booking our interview slots: Kerrang, Metal Hammer UK, Rolling Stone... and *Absolute Underground*? Yep, there we were, on the big list, in with the big guns. No one had heard of us in Europe. We had officially arrived: AU is worldwide. We explained to the other journalists that we were free, volunteer and from Canada. They asked "What's your circulation?" we said, "Oh you know, Vancouver, Montreal, Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg... it's a free mag." They were stoked and impressed.

The artists we interviewed with loved the DIY nature of the mag and our trip. That was the year Victoria's Sam Dunn put out the *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*, documentary, which I watched surrounded by thousands of fellow metalheads on the main stage screen. I even saw my old buddy Devo from Victoria in the mosh pit for At The Gates! We didn't even know each other

was there at the festival. And as well, watching a re-united Carcass play at sidestage with Justin from 3IOB, after they played a killer set. I distinctly remember standing sidestage, and they brought Ken Owen up to do a drum solo, he'd had a terrible brain injury and was still going out with the band to support. It felt really special to watch the whole crowd clap along, to see the support for Ken, the other artists cheering him on, to feel that west coast Canada metal had audience and traction in Europe – the world got smaller and kinder on that trip, metal family worldwide forever.

How can *Absolute Underground* get even better in your opinion?

Would love to see a radio show: interviews, some ads for businesses, gig listings, and also fresh music from bands that are in the magazine. Make it downloadable. Radio podcast concept. We'd need record labels to support the release of music in that format, it could be a cool way to reach out.

What do you see for the future?

More mags, more stories, more photos. If you're reading this edition of the mag, and you've got a story idea, a new section, a festival or event you want to cover – put it forward, reach out, join us. Let's go!

Last words for AU readers out there.

If this last year of pandemic lockdown has shown us anything, a scene is only as strong as it's supporters. Bars, bands, businesses - support your scene! Be active! Speak your truth! Take time to read an interview in AU and check out the band, maybe it'll be your new favourite. Good luck and have fun out there!

DEMONIKA



Who are we talking to and what is your involvement with *Absolute Underground* magazine?

It's Demonika! I've done many things to help out AU from when it first got rolling in the West alongside Chad. Currently I run the DNR [Do Not

Read - Do Not Resuscitate] section which is an underground and indie book review section. I also do collages, sometimes covers, whatever else is needed to be done graphically that I can help out with.

When did you first come across the magazine and what made you want to get involved with the publication?

Chad saw a lot of potential in the magazine and really wanted to bring it out to Alberta. After I saw it, I knew Ira and Willy had something special. I agreed, and was fully on board as well.

What do you think makes this magazine unique?

The fact that we are one of the last physical magazines in Canada like this is amazing. Not only that, we really focus on music, art, films, etc that don't get a lot of attention in the mainstream media. We pick and choose what is important to us, and hope the readers see something they wouldn't have otherwise. It also helps give exposure to underground and indie artists of all types.

How have you seen *Absolute Underground* grow over the years?

From a little black and white rag that was only on the coast, it's come a long way! Very proud of how we have grown it. It's the effort of a lot of people doing it because they love it, and that is pretty special.

Why do you think publications like this are important?

There are none left!!! Print has been eaten up by the internet and I think it's so important to hold something in your hands. Secondly, our scenes need exposure, be it music, film, skateboarding... whatever it is, there are people doing incredible things all across our country, let's talk about it.

What are some highlights so far for you? Your favorite AU moments?

I loved going to Punk Rock Bowling every year, back when AU had a team, lots of crazy, wild times. The shows we've done, the people we have met and relationships we've solidified. I love working for the scene, it's important to participate and create and grow things that bring you joy.

How can *Absolute Underground* get even better in your opinion?

We keep doing what we are doing, more people pitching in, leaning in. It takes a village, we need more people excited to help.

What do you see for the future?

More of the same hard work. If I'm fantasizing, I'd love for us to have a central office where we all went into.

Last words for AU readers out there.

Just a huge thank-you to anyone who has ever helped out in any way, shape or form. From delivering the magazines, to building them brick by brick, it's a lot of

work by lots of hands. If you ever wanted to get involved, please reach out, especially the younger generation!

WILLOW GAMBERG



Who are we talking to and what is your involvement with *Absolute Underground* magazine?

I'm Willow Gamberg, and I have been the music editor of the magazine for almost seven years now.

When did you first come across the magazine and what made you want to get involved with the publication?

When I was about 20, I moved to Victoria for



a short time and went looking for rock n roll gigs. I found the *Absolute Underground* store in Trounce Alley and immediately liked the vibe and wanted to get involved.

What do you think makes this magazine unique?

Absolute Underground is one of the last bastions of printed counterculture magazines in Canada - it's a place and platform for weirdos, artists, punks, and everything in between.

How have you seen *Absolute Underground* grow over the years?

More glossy pages, wider distro!

Why do you think publications like this are important?

New bands starting out get a chance to speak, and new writers get to tackle stories they might not otherwise have the opportunity for.

What are some highlights so far for you? Your favorite AU moments?

I loved going to Noctis Metal Conference in 2016 with Ira and Chad, and interviewing Baroness, twice!

How can *Absolute Underground* get even better in your opinion?

Wider distro and online presence!

Last words for AU readers out there.

Thank you for your support! Keep reading *Absolute Underground*!



Plizzken

Interview by Chuck Andrews

Absolute Underground: In the punk/oi subculture you are most famously known as the singer of Stomper 98 from Germany, correct?

Sebi Walkenhorst: Correct. I'm also singing in German metal/HC band ÜBERGANG (engl. transition). Beside Roi Pearce from The Last Resort and Mike Brands from Arch Rivals, I'm singing for The Business. It's a live thing with former members from this classic band.

AU: How did the Plizzken project come about? And who else plays in it with you?

SW: In late 2019 I was hanging out at the recording studio from my friend Dennis Poschwatta (Guano Apes). He and my friend Doki, who's playing the lead guitar in ÜBERGANG have a band going and they did some videoshots. Anyway, we were talking about bands and they asked me why I didn't start something in English language. Well, I was busy with the other bands, so I didn't think about until in December I was in London for a gig with The Business. At Steve Whale's house, the guitar player of The Business, he grabbed a guitar and wanted me to sing something. So we started jamming and I rhymed in English and it felt natural in a kind of easy way. He also told me I should maybe think about some English songs. Some years ago, after a tour together with The Old Firm Casuals, their singer/guitar player and good friend Lars Frederiksen and I had the idea to do something together in

English, too. That fell down, because he joined S98 in 2016. The initiation for Plizzken came in spring 2020. When Covid hit the globe and for all of us life changed dramatically my best friend Silvio Schlesier and I started to build our own studio and didn't stop until now. After a couple of songs we asked the others if they wanted to join this new band. They all didn't need long after they heard what kind of music we were working on.

Silvio Schlesier – Lead and rhythm guitar
Erik Henning – Lead and rhythm guitar
Markus Walther – Bass guitar
Stefan Herz – Drums and percussion
Sebastian Walkenhorst - vocals

AU: Plizzken definitely has a bit of a different sound than your other band, Stomper 98, plus you sing in English in Plizzken, not German. Anything you would like to add to that?

SW: Before and during the process of songwriting Silvio and I played a lot of records to each other. Stuff we both grew up on. You know, mostly classic rock 'n roll, beat, punk rock, reggae, etc. That was before we even took any instrument in our hands and started writing. Covid made us all spend time at home and we were hanging on the phone and shared this like back the days when I discovered the world of music.

For myself I needed and wanted to learn how

to write in English. I left school at 15 and missed a lot of English classes so bands like the Small Faces, The Who, Clash, Sex Pistols, The Specials, David Bowie, The Jam, Billy Idol, New York Dolls, Ramones, Redskins, Housemartins, Buzzcocks, Beach Boys, etc. had a heavy rotation on my player and I was focused how songs in English are working and what I wanna do as a singer and writer. In my opinion Stomper 98 got a different sound, the song structures are different though. But hey, at the end it's not important for me. Plizzken stands for itself.

AU: Will Plizzken be a long term project?

SW: Hells yeah. We already recorded the drumtracks for the second album. 14 new songs are down and soon we finish them with the other instruments and vocals. When times are better

and gigs/touring are possible again, we will be on the road as much as possible.

AU: When did you first start working with Pirates Press Records?

SW: They released an American pressing for the last S98 LP and this was a great experience. Before that, I met Skippy overhere on a few festivals and it was always fun to hang out. The punk rock

world is small, so after a gig in San Francisco with S98 we visited the Pirates Press Headquarters for a great aftershow party. That wasn't hard work, but a lot of fun.

And last year they released that fantastic *40 years of Oi!* album and S98 was on that, too. Again all was easy to handle and this is very satisfying for a band when the label works straight and on point.

AU: And did they seem like the obvious choice from the get go to put out the Plizzken LP?

SW: From my side, it was clear on an early stage of the recordings for *...And Their Paradise is Full of Snakes* that I would like to hear what Skippy and the team think about the whole thing. When the record was ready, I sent it to Pirates Press Records first outside Germany. And they liked what they heard. To answer your question quickly, we're stoked and excited to release our debut record at PPR. As a brand new band it's great to get so much trust and support from a label like Plizzken gets from them, we're stoked and excited to have the opportunity to work with them.

AU: Where does the album title *...And Their Paradise Is Full of Snakes* come from?

SW: All our songs deal with politics and crisis, on a personal level and vividly. I can't give advice what people should do with their lives. And honestly, I don't want to. But I see what's going on around me and everywhere I go, there are so many double standards. In the western civilization where I grew up and where I live, you can find this on every corner. And you can hear the preachers for the common lifestyle everywhere you go. There has to be something else than the system we live in. I'm a very political person and critical, as well. As a worker, I don't accept the concept we have over here about who earns the money and who has the money. The redistribution and behavior of large corporations is unacceptable. Many people are searching for the holy grail in form of possessions. And they forget what life is about. That's why I consider myself as antisocial in a positive term. I don't wanna participate and exploit poor countries, meanwhile they are starving and the church tells them it's god's will. Also I like to play around with metaphors in the lyrics. Look, all the stories from the bible are written down to keep women low. The story with the apple and Paradise. Lucifer seduced Eve and she succumbed to him and that made sure that she was chased out of Paradise. This is just an example of how men turned this world into their battlefield. And I don't like that world. As a son, a brother to two sisters and a father of a 12-year-old

PIRATES PRESS RECORDS

old girl, I wanna sing and denounce this situation. And if they call this society a paradise, we should watch the snakes. They don't want a better place for all. When I'm doing time, the jail guard is not my friend, but he serves me food and water. In my opinion it's not an option to live in an golden cage, selfish enough that nobody gives a fuck anymore.

AU: When you first started singing in bands, who were your biggest inspirations? Which frontmen or women from other bands made you want to really get up and sing in front of people?

SW: As a kid, I was watching bands like KISS, Adam & The Ants, Billy Idol and stuff like this on the TV. That was in the early eighties. The shock, the action, the attitude, that was so cool. I imitated Billy Idol in the mirror while singing to his songs. That left an early impact. Later on I started to like people who can tell stories with their music, their voices and their stage action. Inspiring for me until now are forever Patti Smith, Mickey Fitz/The Business, Wendy O' Williams/Plasmatics, David Bowie, Billy Idol, Roger Miret/Agnostic Front, Colin Mcfaul/Cock Sparrer, Jeff Turner/Cockney Rejects, Lemmy Kilmister/Motörhead, Henry Rollins / Blackflag, Rollins Band, Ian Mckaye/Minor Threat, Fugazi. Some of them I saw live and they blow me away. Some of them I only saw videos and they blow me away. Some of them I was lucky enough to share the same stages with and I felt like a little kid again.

AU: What is the most important thing you seek to accomplish by being in a band?

SW: Having a laugh and having a say. I'm in bands for over 30 years now and I don't know how it is to be not a part of something special. Because that's the main feeling for me. It doesn't matter if other people like what we do, it's enough that we love it. To be creative, to work with dedication on something that means a lot to all of us in the band is really hard to describe. I put my thoughts into lyrics and it ended up as a song. That's still fascinating after all these years. And of course it's a big adventure to be on the road and see places and meet people that you would never meet without the music.

AU: What would you really like to see change in the punk/oi subculture?

SW: Old people should quit telling the kids what to do. Let them make their own experiences. Let them build their own scene. It's their world now, and they are the future. This world doesn't need fascists, homophobes, anti-feminists, racists, so no scene needs people like that, too.

AU: Anything else to promote?

SW: Yeah, don't eat or exploit animals. There is no reason for this in rich countries. Support your local companies and be nice to everybody. There is enough hate going on in the world, I'm really tired of this.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans?

SW: You guys got a lot of great bands! Give their records a shot. Propagandi, D.o.a., Razors, Bishops Green, Exciter, The Real Mckenzie's, The Prowlers, Dayglo Abortions, Street Troopers, Anvil and many, many more! Hopefully one day we could play a show or two over there!

AU: How do people find you online?

SW: Check out insta, facebook and twitter for Plizzken. Also soon our own website will be online. Also at the the Pirates Press Records Youtube channel you can find our videos and songs.

piratespressrecords.com

facebook.com/plizzkenpunkrock

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR PLIZZKEN FLEXI DISC RECORDS OF THE SINGLE "DEAR ALL HAPPY PEOPLE." THAT HAVE BEEN INSERTED RANDOMLY INTO ISSUES OF ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND #100 - THANKS TO PIRATES PRESS RECORDS FOR THE HOOK-UP.





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Punk Rock's Patron Saint SID VICIOUS Gets Venerated On Recordings Featuring The Damned's RAT SCABIES!

Nobody embodied the spirit, ethos and attitude of punk rock better than Sid Vicious. As the bass guitarist for Sex Pistols' from 1977 until the band's dissolution a year later and a solo career that found him annihilating stages on

both sides of the pond, Vicious transformed audience expectations of what a rock musician was supposed to be both on and off the stage. Toward the end of his tragically short career, Sid's legendary live shows frequently found him revamping garage rock classics and pop standards with his trademark punk attitude. He did them, just like everything else Sid Vicious ever did, his way. Now a special vinyl release of some of Sid's most ferocious performances has been put together with help from Sid's contemporaries. Working from vocal outtakes of Vicious belting out Sinatra's signature tune "My Way" and The Monkees' classic "(I'm Not Your) Stepping Stone," The Damned's Rat Scabies and Johnny Thunders'

bandmate Walter Lure have revitalized these treasured recordings offering a stark reminder of just how charismatic and influential Vicious was. In addition, Scabies has created both a brand new mix of "My Way" as well as a unique track featuring some Sid studio banter.

Absolute Underground: Good morning Mr. Scabies. What can you tell us about this latest Sid Vicious remixing project?

Rat Scabies: It's a bit of a strange one really because I was talking to Matt Green at Cleopatra Records, he knew how I'd worked with Sid in the past. Then he said, "Well, we've got a couple of things that we wonder if you'd like to sort of tinker with and see if you can do anything with it". So I got the files, which were just Sid's vocals and recreated two versions. I did one that was quite close to the original version of the "My Way" single and then I did kind of a yacht mix. I liked the idea of having Sid sing "My Way," but with a really kind of cheesy backdrop to it. It was a fun thing to do, sort of experimental.

AU: What were the other projects you worked on previously with Sid, when he was still alive?

RS: We did Vicious White Kids, which was also called Sid Sods Off. It was the show that gave him enough money to move to New York. It was back in '76-'77 everybody kind of knew everybody else. So, you'd quite often find yourself around Sid and others drinking somewhere late at night.

AU: When did you first meet Sid?

RS: The first time I met him was at a Sex Pistols gig at a place called the Nashville Rooms in London. He walked into the club and he looked really amazing. He had this gold lamé draped jacket on and his hair was all up and everything. He just looked really fantastic. So me and Brian (James) went over and started talking to him. There weren't many people with short hair and drainpipe trousers and looking extravagant, so anybody that did look like that, they were one of your tribe.

AU: What was it like working with Sid Vicious back in the day?

RS: Working with Sid was always a laugh, often stimulating and sometimes illegal, so it was good to be able to work on these tracks to remind myself of his intellect and humour.

AU: The Damned toured with the Sex Pistols, was Sid in the band at that point?

RS: No, he wasn't at that point. We were on the Anarchy Tour in England and we played one show and then got fired. *laughs*

AU: Did you ever meet Nancy?

RS: Only on Sid's farewell gig. They were inseparable, really. Wherever Sid was, so was Nancy.

AU: Would you say the depiction in the Alex Cox movie Sid and Nancy was accurate?

RS: I remember I didn't see anybody I knew in the film, let's put it that way.

AU: Could you explain more about the big show put on to raise money so that Sid could move to New York?

RS: Glen Matlock wanted everybody to know that there wasn't any kind of animosity between him and Sid. I think they were talking one night and Sid said he was going to New York and how broke he was, so someone had the idea about doing the show and Glen invited me along.

AU: So it was you on drums, Glen Matlock on bass and Sid singing?

RS: Yes and Steve New was on guitar. We played the set and then went into the dressing room. The manager said, "You've only been up there for 25 minutes. Can you play some more?" So we went and did the set again, with Nancy singing the backing vocal this time. I think it's out on an album somewhere. I remember we did "Belsen

PURE PUNK

Was a Gas," and "I Wanna Be Your Dog."

AU: Why did Sid want to move to New York?

RS: I think he just wanted to get out of London.

AU: So this is another remixing project where you're listening to people posthumously. You did one with Lemmy and also Hawkwind's Bob Calvert. What did you find this time listening to the Sid's outtakes?

RS: Well, it's kind of quite sad mixing things from people that you knew or had association with. Because it's kind of just a naked voice. But in other ways, it's good because you're reminded of them in a much greater way than you would be if you were just listening to the record.

AU: What was Sid's sense of humour like?

RS: It was very funny. He was just very sharp, off the cuff. Kind of one line humour. I found him witty. I know nobody thinks of him that way, but he was.

AU: Did you have any contact with him when he was in New York?

RS: No, because he really wasn't there for very long was he? Maybe just a few months.

AU: What was his live performance like that you can remember?

RS: Well he was Sid, you know, it didn't really matter to him if he was walking down the street or on a stage. He would react the same way.

AU: Which songs did you produce on the album?

RS: I did the two versions of "My Way," and then I did another one called "It's Shit." They had this interview with Sid, and they asked me if there

was anything I could do with it. There was one point in the interview where he picks up a bass guitar and he starts playing. So I got a friend of mine to play the same bass part, because Sid wasn't plugged in originally. And we sort of constructed the song around that. "It's shit," was just one of the things Sid said a lot during the interview.

AU: Any other projects in the works for Cleopatra Records?

RS: I just did The 69 Cats album. It's gothy see you in the cemetery kind of stuff.

AU: Any other stories you can share about hanging out with Sid Vicious?

RS: The thing is he did what it said on the tin, Sid was Sid no matter where he was, no matter who he was with, or what he was doing. If you got on with his personality then it was a hoot, but not everybody did.

AU: Were Sid and Johnny Rotten sort of inseparable friends as well?

RS: They were good mates I think, yeah. I don't know how inseparable they were, but they were very close. They'd spent a lot of school years together, and they had a friendship before music got involved.

AU: Did you recently get back together with The Damned?

RS: We announced five reunion shows, all four original members from the first album, that was supposed to happen but because of Corona it was postponed.

AU: Anything else that you want to mention about this new Sid Vicious project?

RS: It was nice to work on something that showed a bit more of his personality and sense of humour. I think it's a good way for him to be remembered.

www.CleopatraRecords.com

My Way will be released on two limited edition vinyls, a 7" and a 12".

Digital version: orcd.co/sid_vicious_my_way


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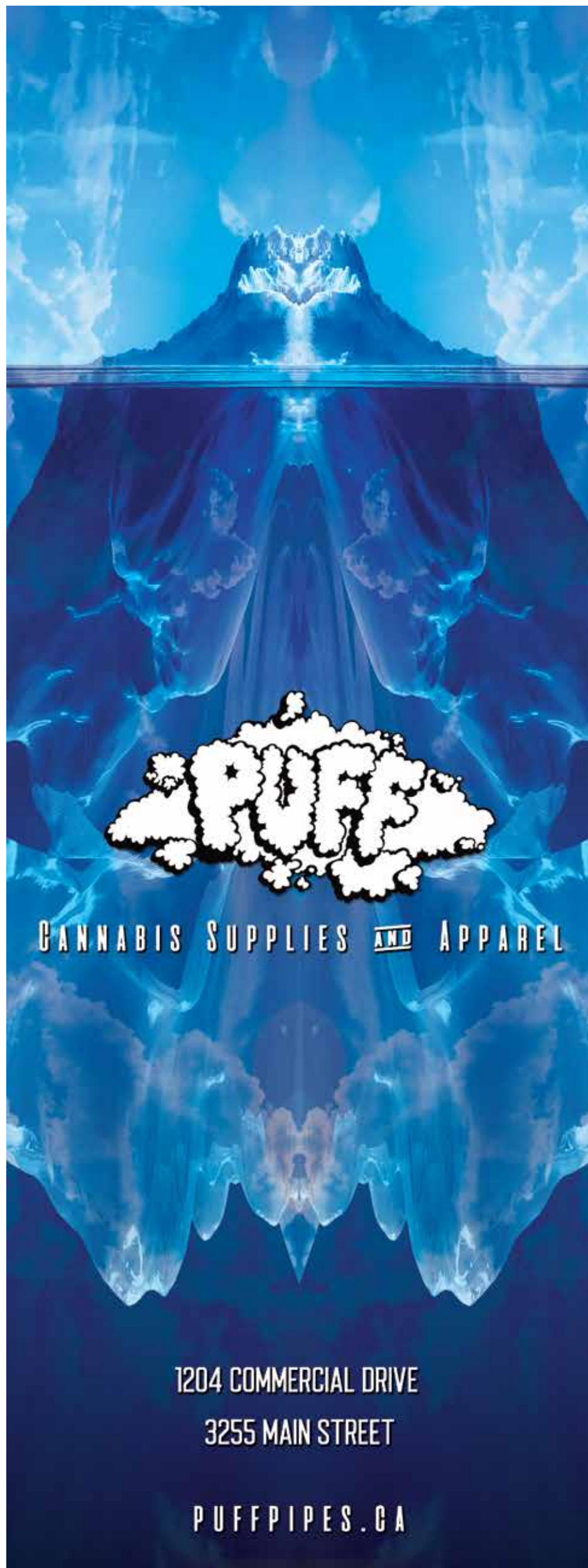

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REAL SICKIES

Once a Sickie always a Sickie

Interview with vocalist Ben Crossman

by Chuck Andrews

AU: Who are we talking to today?

This is Ben from the Real Sickies, pleasure to make your acquaintance."

AU: Where are you guys from and what are you all about?

Most of us are from Edmonton but there's scattered Sickies here and there.

"Once a Sickie always a Sickie", I believe the saying goes? Have you heard that before?

What are we all about? Ahhh jeeze, tough questions right off the bat. Is there gonna be a test later on? Well, I guess you could say we are all about getting the job done on tight timelines. We like good music with a high entertainment value.

AU: Would you like to tell us a little bit about your upcoming fourth album, which will be on Stomp Records?

Sure since you asked! Who doesn't like talking about their art. This one was an interesting one for sure. A lot of the songs took on many transformations before we recorded them for the last time. We started demoing it prior to our last LP actually. On the final attempt to record the album we got Mario Nieva to come in and do a little comb through of what we were working with. He was a real treat to have around and a nice breath of fresh air.

The final version was recorded by Rob Lawless at the physics lab in Edmonton and Terry Paholek did the mastering. Oddly during a pandemic we had the most guests on a recording (safely) than ever before. It was nice to have some new voices added by Luccette, who sang on a duet and helped round out some country dream pop vibes. We also had our friend and recent tour mate Dave Bacon come in and add some bass guitar and bass vocals. Our fellow Sickies, Garret, Smokey and Andrew came in as well to help add some texture. I say country dream pop but this album really draws from many genres and comes across like previous Sickies LPs... only maybe more earnest and driven."

AU: Does the new album have a theme? I noticed the third album had a quarantine/pandemic theme.

Yeah the last one was sort of what we thought was in store when it came to pandemic life. Most of it still checks out. Previously we were Out of Space and felt claustrophobic while wanting to explore the vast yet limited space around us. This one... this one I tells yah is about, well... I don't wanna give tooooo much away but it is titled "LOVE IS FOR LOVERS"

So I guess you could say it's about accepting people and oneself as they are. It's about open and honest love for all those around you. It's also about processing the hardships that come with love and sometimes having to walk away from it to love yourself. That and the struggle to keep that love alive and look at the sunshine in the darkest moments. I really liked the Db's song "Love is for Lovers" and after releasing a few music

videos in the past, we had this person who left some really homophobic comments on youtube and we knew then that in a few albums we would properly address those kinds of attitudes.

AU: You guys seem to love making music videos! Which I personally think is awesome. How many exactly have you made?

Good question!! Yeah we love making videos!! I grew up making vhs mixtapes of punk bands whenever they got played on Going Coastal or The Punk Show etc, or when Showcase network aired specials on punk. That was amazing.

How many exactly have we made?? I don't know. I highly suggest to the readers checking out our YouTube channel or looking us up and finding out! It will be like the jelly beans in the jar game."

AU: Which of your videos is your favourite? I personally loved the one for Go Away, as it referenced Pop Up Video which I grew up with.

I liked Go Away too! That was fun and we did it by just setting up a camera and hanging a white sheet from the ceiling. We started making our own videos before anyone knew who we were and that one was a high point for us as DIY video directors.

One of my favourite memories though for making videos was when we did COOL CLUB! It was a cold night in the garage and we tried heating the place up with a blow torch. I got to smash a TV which was foolishly still plugged in. It started whirring and smoking (could have been a fellow Sickies' smoke though, I don't know.). After that we heated up the pizza that was delivered in the video with the blow torch. That was fun. Simple times back then.

AU: Where was the last place the Real Sickies played before the pandemic started?

We played ummmmm hold on let me check.. Better Than Fred's, which reminded me of "Drop Dead Fred". It was in Grand Prairie I think March 15th. We did the long drive not fully knowing what to expect as the rest of that tour was likely not gonna happen. Our fill-in bass player had to cancel that show due to personal reasons, so that night Mario, who was playing in Real McKenzies, learnt our songs backstage 20 minutes before the set. Good thing our set was only 26 minutes.

Anyway he killed it so that's when we decided to hire him to "come out and play" bass on "Love is for Lovers" and give an outside view on the songs.

AU: What is the band's favourite food? The one thing that everyone agrees on.

Edibles.

AU: Any tips for surviving the current Apocalypse?

Put fresh cookies next to your mask and you'll smell them all day. Wash your hands 50 times a day and also be good and kind to people, no matter how much they piss you off. We are in a pandemic and it's hard enough.

AU: Anything else to promote?

Good mental health.

AU: Final words.

Peace.

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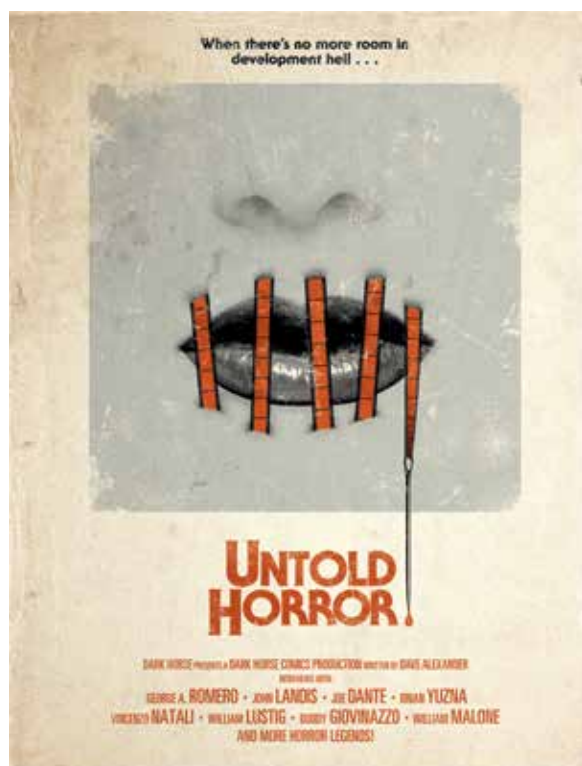
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Untold Horror

Interview with horror expert Dave Alexander
By Ira "Horrorshow" Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

DA: Dave Alexander, former editor-in-chief and current part-owner of *Rue Morgue* magazine, filmmaker and author of *Movie Monsters: A Creature Feature Companion*.

AU: How did you first get on the path to becoming a writer?

DA: When was a kid I loved movies, all things spooky and asking questions. That curiosity led me, eventually, to volunteering at the student newspaper at the University of Alberta, which led to a freelancing career for publications such as *Maxim* and *Spin*. Then I took an editor position in *Rue Morgue*, where I could really explore the genre I loved so much, and in particular write about film. Eventually I started making films and all those things combined led to *Untold Horror*.

AU: Tell us about *Untold Horror*, the latest book you have written.

DA: *Untold Horror* is an exploration of genre movies that didn't get made, a showcase of what remains

of them, and interviews with their creators and/or experts about them. We cast as wide a net as possible but Dark Horse wanted to lead with imagery, so we had to choose projects that have some sort of visuals. We cover much of the past century, and some chapters are about a particular projects, a certain filmmaker, or even a studio, as in the case of the unmade Universal *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* films.

AU: I know the concept was originally planned as a documentary series, what stage of development is that currently in?

DA: The book grew out of a larger brand created by myself and my writing partner Mark Pollesel. We've been developing it for several years and – thanks to co-producer/cinematographer/co-

director Bob Barrett – have shot around 30 interviews, plus a bunch of other B-roll, so there's enough there for a first season and part of a feature. The project landed with a couple different companies that each had different visions for it but didn't quite find the right niche, so we're currently in talks some other companies and investors. These kinds of things can be quite a process, so the joke is that hopefully we find the right partner before *Untold Horror* becomes untold itself.

AU: Tell us some of the people you interviewed when researching this book.

DA: We interviewed a lot of incredible filmmakers and other creators for the book. We have an extensive interview with George A. Romero, done shortly before he died, and we picked out one particular project for the book, and then talked with some of the collaborators

on it, such as former Marvel Comics editor-in-chief Jim Shooter and acclaimed comic book artist Bob Layton.

The *Jaws 3, People 0* chapter is pretty wild, as well and it was incredible to interview Joe Dante at his home for that, and I stumbled across the personal phone number of its producer Matty Simmons online, called him up and had a great talk with him about it just weeks before he passed. For those unfamiliar, he produced *Animal House* and was the publisher of *National Lampoon*. And it was a real pleasure to do in in-depth dive on Vincenzo Natali's unmade projects, as I love his work and he was very

forthcoming with stories, scripts and imagery – some of which is just mind blowing.

AU: What are some of the best ideas you've learned these horror directors tried to get off the ground? Which ones do you think would have been/can still be high water marks of Horror?

DA: I love to think about what would've happened if Romero and his then-producer Peter Grunwald would've made the first Marvel superhero feature in the '80s and how that would've affected both his career and the company. I also love the imagery and the story for Richard Raaphorst's *Worst Case Scenario*, which was one of the earliest viral trailer sensations. And I absolutely love the script

for Robert Parigi's *Chrome Gothic*. There are many, many more incredible scripts out there, too, which we didn't include because there was no available imagery, such as some of the unmade John Carpenter stuff. There are some incredible genre stories here that should've been made and hopefully will get made...

AU: Is it true part of the concept of the *Untold Horror* TV series will be attempting to get some of these lost movies produced. Any luck making that happen yet?

DA: Part of the brand we've developed is indeed actively trying to get some unmade horror films into production, but I won't say much more than that right now. We've come pretty close.

AU: What is it about Horror that still fuels your

enthusiasm?

DA: I'm still in love with the horror genre because – as *Untold Horror* has proven – there's so much to explore, limitless stories to tell, both fiction and non-fiction. Mark and I always say that when it comes to examining the world of unmade genre projects, every time we open a door, there are three more behind it. Horror attracts a passionate fan base, some of who become passionate creators, and the blood, sweat and, well, fears, they put into these stories, is incredibly compelling.

AU: Any advice for aspiring writers?

DA: My advice to aspiring scribes is to devour a variety of writing in both the fiction and non-fictions worlds, learn the basics of sentence construction such as spelling and grammar, and then write – push yourself to see something through to the end, even though it can be hard.

AU: How were you able to get the book published by Dark Horse comics, and what do they bring to the table?

DA: We were lucky enough to get the project in front of Dark Horse because of filmmaker Tim Sullivan (2001 *Maniacs*, *Driftwood*), who has worked with the company. He was partnered with us on the brand and set up a meeting. The fact that Mark and I are huge Dark Horse really made the whole thing super exciting. I should also mention that Justin Erickson of Phantom City Creative (and he's a former *Rue Morgue* designer) designed



the cover and he's worked with Dark Horse before, so they liked having him onboard.

AU: When and where will the book be officially released?

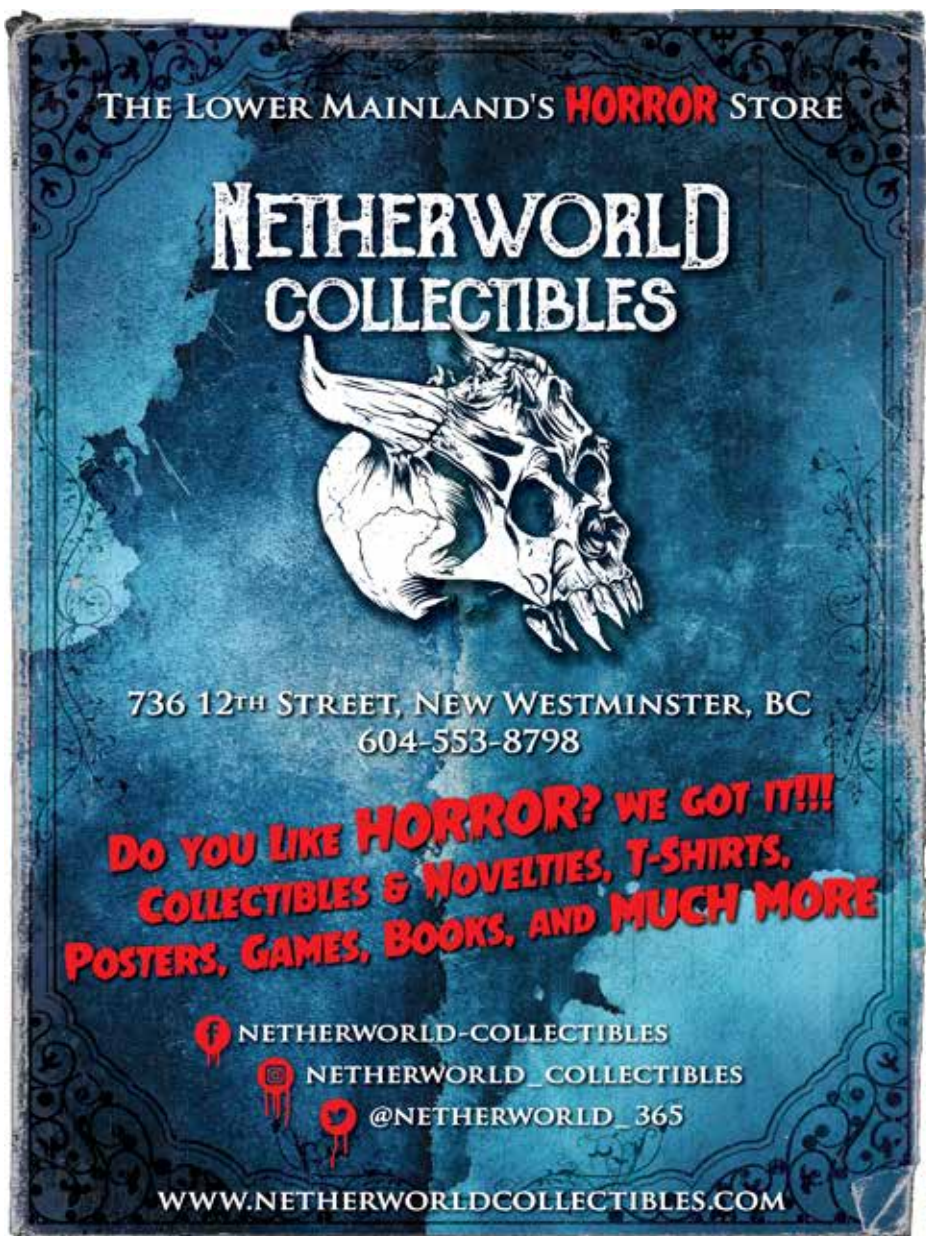
DA: The book is out at bookstores on August 17. You can get it directly from Dark Horse here: www.darkhorse.com/Books/3005-747/Untold-Horror-HC, and of course at Amazon.

AU: Final words for ravenous fans hungry for these *Untold Horrors*?

DA: If you're dying for more *Untold Horror* content, please post about the book online, show your enthusiasm and let others know. It means the world to us as fans that other fans have the same interest in this. With your support we can make the show, a movie, another book, and maybe some of these unmade movies a reality.

AU: Where can people learn more about this project online?

DA: Find us here: untoldhorror.ca, on IG at @untoldhorror, on FB at facebook.com/UntoldHorror/, on Twitter at @Untold_Horror



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This audio drama by Broken Mirror Films is available to listen at <https://redcircle.com/shows/ghost-town-killer> and there's no paywall to keep on going. It's offered freely by Jeremy Lutter and Marcy Waughtal of Broken Mirror Films. They made it during the pandemic to stay creative, and it's been a labour of love as they are fans of the true crime genre themselves.

Black wants proper closure and suspects how her sister Amanda (Emily Tennant) died. She comes home to Fort Macbeth, a town out in the middle of nowhere (located in BC), and finds a lot of prejudices still going on. This is something she thought she'd be able to leave behind, and she also finds not everyone is as willing to speak the truth.

The cast includes Vancouver-based talents such as Dakota Daulby, Hiro Kanagawa, Olivia Cheng, Matthew MacCaull, Curtis Lam, Johannah Newmarch, Gabriel Carter and Andre Tricoteux.

To Find A "Ghost Town Killer" Podcast

By Ed Sum

Ghost Town Killer is an update to the "old time radio" format, where we are dealing with a podcaster turned sleuth. She's interested in the paranormal enough where she loves taking viewers into haunted situations live.

According to the creators, Lilith Black (Dalila Bela) has Fox Mulder's drive to want to believe (*X-Files*) and Lisbeth Salander's (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*) tenacity when dealing with people.

To make a supernatural audio drama can be tough. The believability lies in how well the world is established in your imagination, and the talents do an exceptional job. Despite having the pilot as reference at the time of writing, I'm intrigued! Having a 'podcast' of a seance was good enough for me!

By the time of this article's publication, the first two or three episodes will be online. It's a great drama to check out as it approaches its climatic end, especially when these creators have teased at a serial killer prowling about this town, and that person loves to eat people!

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POWDER SEEKERS

The Vancouver Island Hoary Marmot
by Brydon Parker

The rarest animal in Canada is the Vancouver Island hoary marmot. Why is this mammal so endangered? Well my friends, this is the exciting story of survival, greed, animal lust, competition for mates, and honour. There are competing tribes of skiers, snowboarders, and greedy land developers that are destroying the marmots prime habitat.

Caught in the middle is the last surviving colony of tough little marmots. The reasons for the marmots decline are varied. Ranging from the fact that they are delicious and appeal to a wide culinary audience, starting with the local carnivore population of wolves, cougars, eagles, and most regrettably human poaching.

Now if that wasn't enough to strain the population to the brink of extinction... All marmots are extremely susceptible to human vices such as alcoholism and rampant drug use.



These creatures habitually make their homes around, in, and under human dwellings where they gain access to these illicit substances by raiding the humans stash. This has the effect of enraging the local human population. Retribution for the raids is often extermination or predation.

We go now to Mount Washington, British Columbia to meet The Powder Seekers, a group dedicated to riding powder in prime marmot habitat to interfere with large developers and others who wish to harm the marmots. The powder seekers lived with the marmots in harmony until the pandemic of 2020 and everything went crazy!

To Be Continued...

VANCOUVER ISLAND MARMOT FACTS:

Uniquely Canadian, the Vancouver Island marmot is one of 14 marmot species worldwide and one of the most critically endangered mammals in the world. Found only on Vancouver Island in British Columbia they are easily identified by their unique appearance and differ from other marmot species in behaviour, genetics and ecology.

Vancouver Island marmots are easy to recognize by their rich chocolate brown fur with contrasting white patches on their nose, chin, forehead and chest.

Vancouver Island marmots live in family groups called colonies and hibernate below ground from mid-September until late April or early May. Hibernation permits the marmots to survive the long alpine winters when food is not available.

During the active summer period, marmots spend a lot of their time lounging on rocks and watching for predators. Only a few hours each day are spent



looking for food.

Nose – touching (“greeting”) and play fighting (“boxing”) are common behaviours. When alarmed, marmots give piercingly loud whistles, which earned them the nickname “Whistle Pig”.

Vancouver Island marmots have five distinct whistles or trills used for different purposes. That's more than any other marmot species. The Vancouver Island Marmot is a remarkable animal. It is endemic to Canada - one of only a small handful of mammals to occur in this country and nowhere else. Unfortunately, it is also Critically Endangered. In 2004, fewer than 30 remained in the wild. Recovery efforts by the Foundation and our partners have been restoring the population. The Vancouver Island marmot (Marmota

POWDER SEEKERS

vancouverensis) is one of the rarest mammals in the world. Thanks to recent recovery efforts, the population has increased from a low count in 2004 of less than 30 wild marmots living in a handful of colonies to just over 200 marmots on over more than 20 mountains in 2019.

marmots.org



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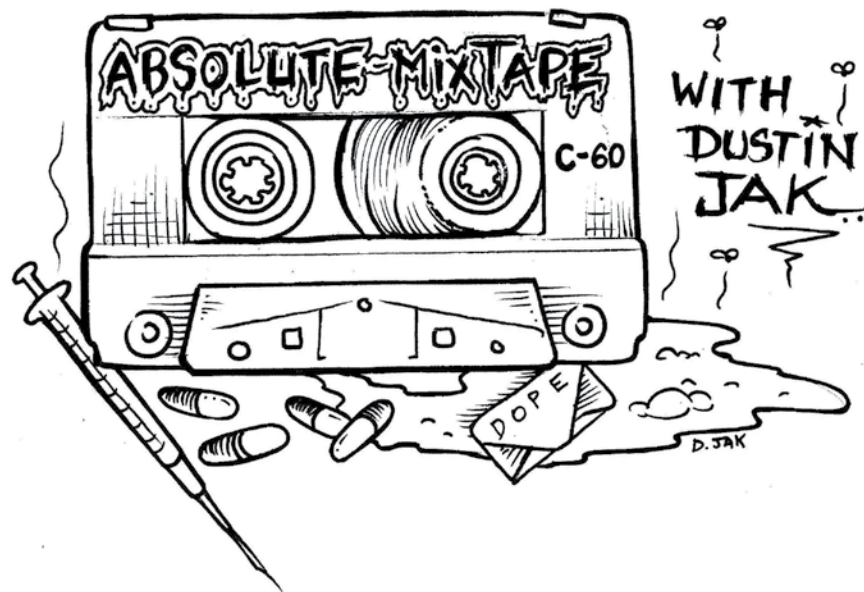
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by Dustin JaK

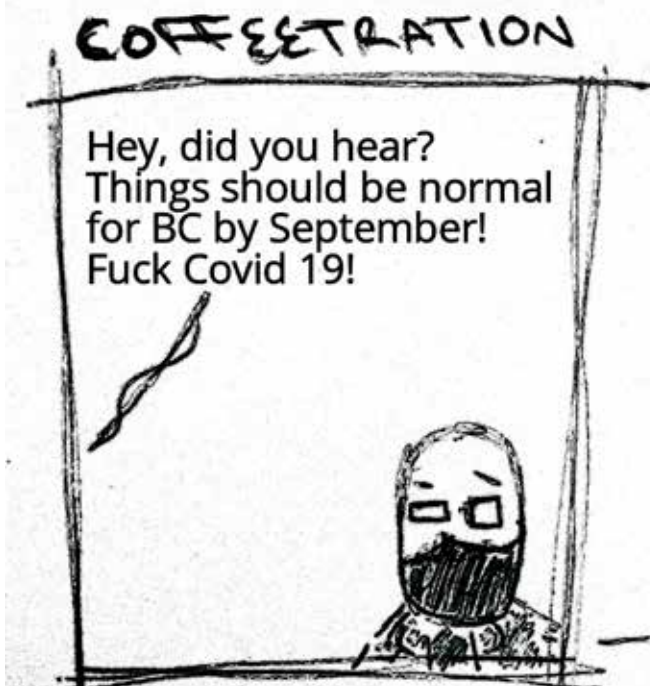
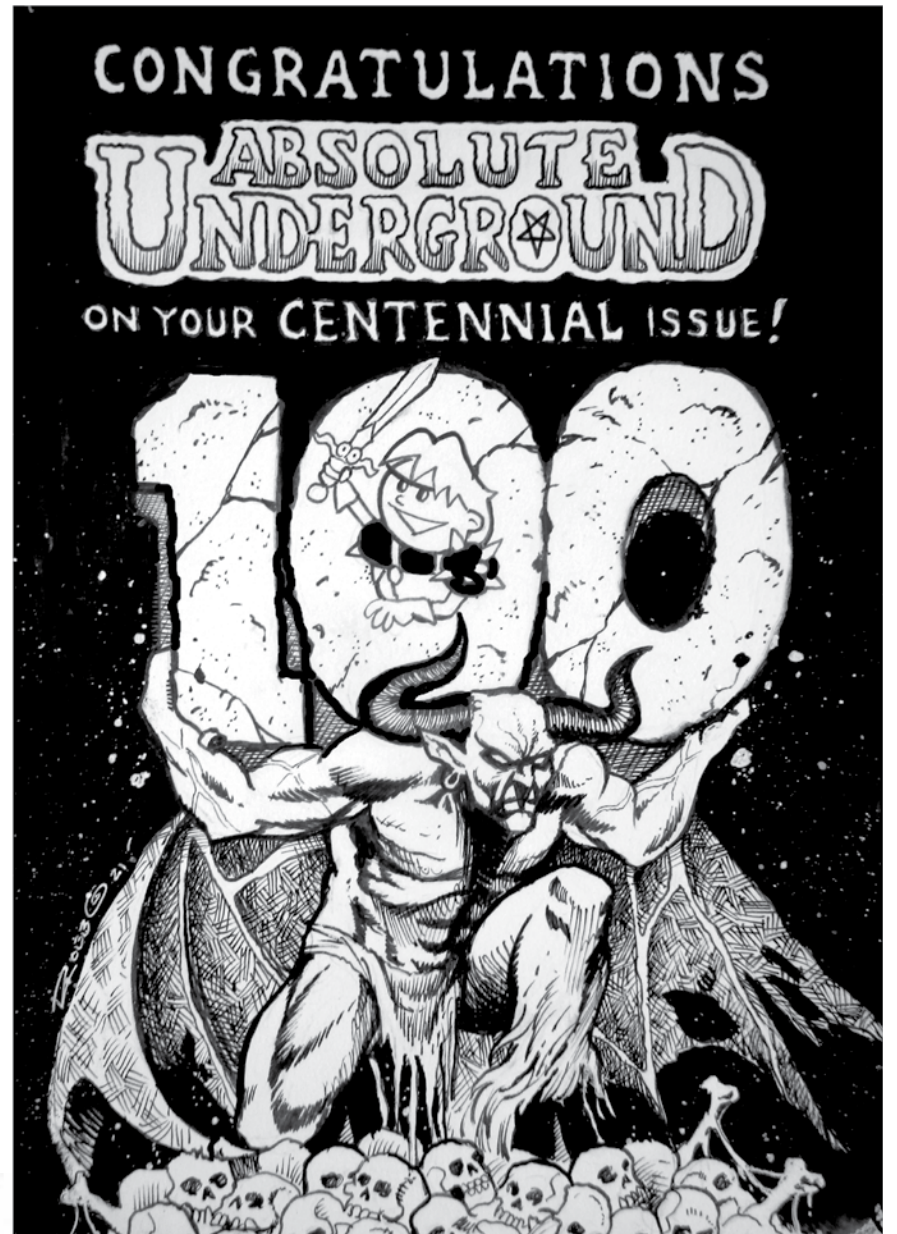
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Death Angel - Evil Priest
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Dark Angel - Black Prophecies
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Offenders - I Hate Myself
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Cannibal Corpse - Hammer Smashed Face
Black Sabbath - Electric Funeral
Sex Pistols - Bodies
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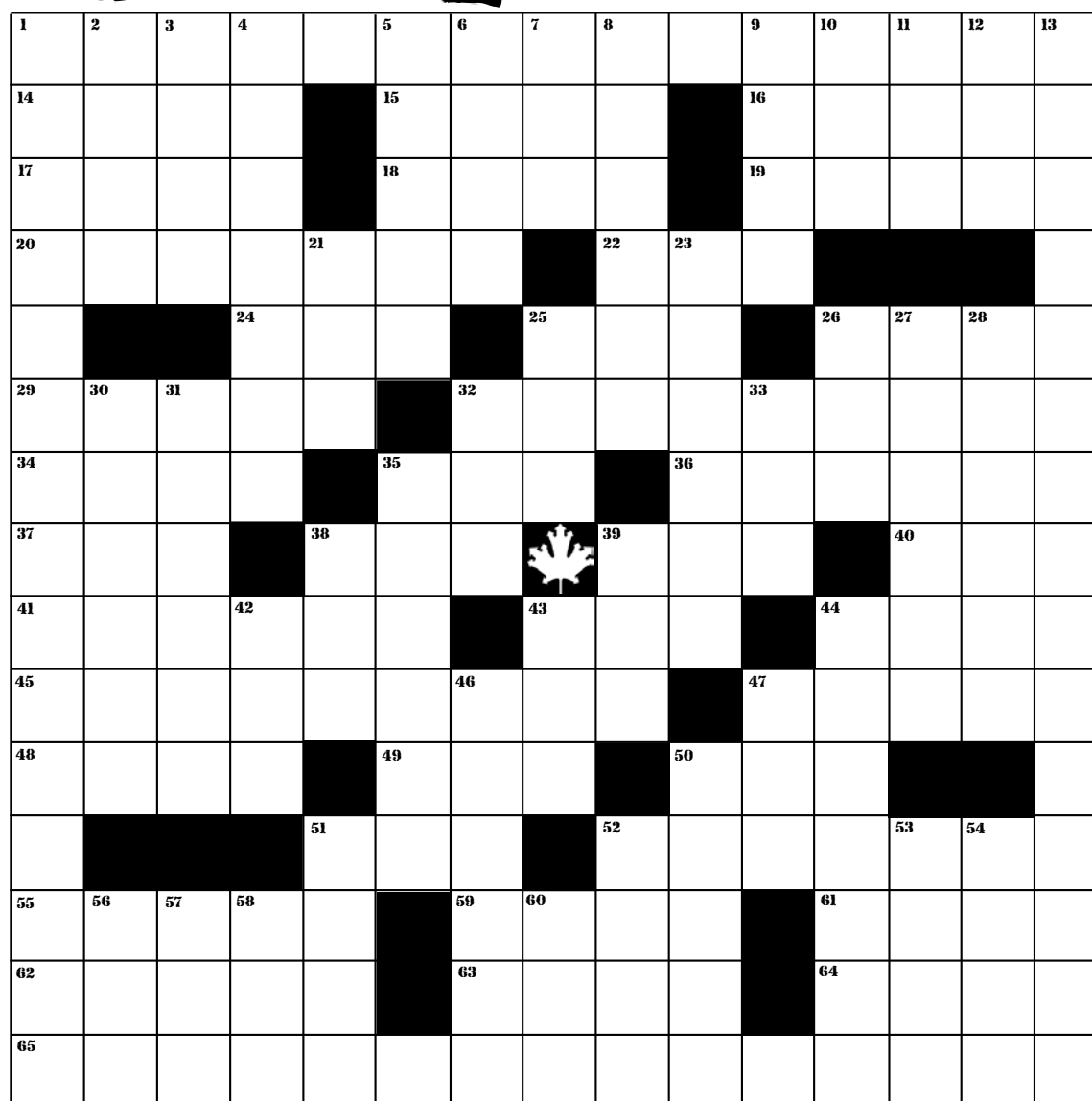
CANADAZE

ACROSS

1. 2019 release from Canadian Punks that claim to be from the far far North
14. Location of 1-across band (with "North")
15. "My Aim Is ____"
16. "Bye-bye" in Brest
17. "Hey" in Montego Bay
18. Post-shower powder
19. Key number for SNFU albums
20. Many a hockey player when they were growing up
22. Punks from Montpellier
24. Hosp. areas
25. Before, before words
26. The Vagabonds' Duguay
29. "As the World ____"
32. A rabid beaver, for example
34. London boy band, for short
35. Posed
36. Machu _____
37. There are several in the MLS
38. Where some patients go after 24-across
39. Word with big or 40
40. Amp's bottom end
41. _____ their own
43. Abbr. after many vets' names
44. Bando and namesakes
45. What Hamilton ain't
47. "The _____ of Total Anarchy" punk compilation
48. Cosmo competition
49. Word with story or light
50. MSN competitor
51. It broadcast the John Peel show
52. Traditional provincial song covered by Ripcordz
55. Greek muse of erotic poetry
59. "Don't _____ a cow"
61. Pop singer Voisine
62. It's a wrap
63. A witness, sometimes
64. Southernmost major hwy. in the US
65. Calgary street Punk band or who you may meet along the 49th parallel

DOWN

1. Van-based celtic folk band
2. Shakespearean "Me neither"
3. Actress Lena
4. "Working for the _____"



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5. James and Kett
6. A gangster might smell this
7. Partner of void
8. Canadian hero Laura
9. Canadian basketball star Steve
10. Poetic tribute
11. Lab at the centre of many covid-19 conspiracy theories
12. Shoe width for big foot?
13. Listing for CBTG's
21. CN and CP
23. Tempest locale
25. Smear of the Germs
26. A Shure bet
27. Gremlin or Hornet
28. Nascar's Bobby and family
30. Nerdish?
31. Flip
32. When doubled, a Kenyan uprising
33. Partner of tuck
35. US financial giant Charles
38. Slippery
39. Movie about a dirty toy
42. Bar option
43. Outside Quebec inside Quebec
44. Sun rooms
46. Cage and Streep movie "The _____ Thief"
47. Hit for Captain Sensible
50. Energy needed for a fly to perform a push-up
51. Paul Hewson
52. "Stukas _____ Disneyland"
53. Longstanding show on KROQ
54. Finished a cake or finished off a rival
56. Part of a stadium chant
57. "You _____ Not Alone"
58. Key often used when making tables
60. Summer drink

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birdboy	Lil_Babee_4EVA	schnüdlbug
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Dim Wit	Max Boonch	Soft Fossil
Emma Lee Toyoda	Nivram	The This
Francis Baptiste	Oblomov	Tonk
Funny Death & radish(feat. Meatless Deluxe)	Peach Pyramid	Transistor Riot
		Yawn

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Get In Loser, We're Going to Music Waste

Music Waste 2021 Coming 2 A Screen Near U

Rising from the ashes of the Covid-cancelled Music Waste 2020, this year's virtual festival is adapting to the times, while sticking to it's DIY roots.

With shows streaming online June 17-20th, festival goers can expect exclusive pre-recorded performances and digital offerings from a characteristically eclectic lineup with a focus on inventive, emerging, and local acts. Music Waste 2021's Y2K 2.0 theme is a pastiche of the noughties tabloid, offering a playful blend of nostalgia escapism & good ol' fashioned celebrity worship. In place of tickets, this year's showcases will be accessible online by all, with the optional—but coveted—physical festival pass available for a \$15 donation.

From true blue country (Tonk) to glitchtastic post-punk dancecore (Transistor Riot), this year's compact 27 artist bill packs a punch. The diverse lineup features brand new pandemic projects like the summery bedroom bops of Rainbows End and the introspective cinematic menagerie of Max Boonch; west coast faves like the interdimensional pop of Devours, the soft punk of Emma Lee Toyoda, and the vibrant dreampop of Peach Pyramid; and genre-blended splendor like the afropop of Shindig 2020 winner Adewolf, the lo-fi chiptune dance music of schnüdlbug, and the mood-swinging garage rock of Little

Sprout.

The usual scrappy charm of the festival will be captured this year in pre-recorded performances and amateur home videos. A fully live component featuring our esteemed host, the drag legend Amy Grindhouse, will be streaming between sets from the stage of beloved DIY scene mainstay, Red Gate Arts Society.

Earlier this month, the festival presented two public online workshops providing accessible and affordable education in digital content creation. There was a video workshop taught by Maya

Ritchey from Queer Based Media, and a sound recording workshop taught by Jade Weekes from Support The Scene. Both workshops explored how to create quality digital content with a DIY approach. Participants left equipped with the requisite skills to participate in virtual showcases like our 2021 festival.

For the 27 years it's existed, Music Waste has been a 100% volunteer-run festival. In order to reduce barriers for access to the online fest, there will be both paid and unpaid ticketing options for attendees. To help off-set festival costs, with profits evenly shared by artists, commemorative festival passes and festival merchandise will soon be available for purchase at musicwaste.ca, alongside this year's edition of the annual lineup mixtape—Big Wasted Tunes 2021. New this year, festival goers can capture the experience of IRL debauchery with deluxe swag bags featuring community-sourced treasures and treats.

The full lineup is available on the Music Waste website.

musicwaste.ca



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Digging into Chad Ferrin's budget film, H.P. Lovecraft's The Deep Ones

By Ed Sum

Coming to DVD, Digital, On Demand, and Redbox Kiosks on June 15

Chad Ferrin is best known for *Ghouls and Parasites* (two genre favourites) and his latest work, H.P. Lovecraft's *The Deep Ones* will soon arrive on additional platforms. He made it during the covid pandemic. As the world slowly gets back to normal and people want to hit the beaches, perhaps watching this seaside flick is not the best idea.

It's a fun watch as this film suggests not all Airbnb operations and the communities that spawn from sharing can lead to trouble. When an unsuspecting couple (played by Gina La Piana and Jonathan Urb) rented a home

at the Solar Beach Colony, the cult they discover has a plan for them. They believe the works of H.P. Lovecraft are real and they want to bring the monsters to life!

Essentially, *The Deep Ones* was developed after Ferrin sat down with a bunch of his creative friends and realized they got use of a beach house to film at. Chad said, "Let's crank out a cheap little slasher-type film and have fun with it. I saw photos of the ocean and the house being pitched for us to use and Lovecraft came to mind. I love the idea of making a film about a cult who worships H.P. Lovecraft's writings."

"One thing I've learned to embrace with low-budget filmmaking is to let those random things

decide where you're going to go with a movie production. We shot *The Deep Ones* in six days for about ten thousand dollars."

More questions were asked, though:

AU: What would you say to detractors because you are making a budget movie? I'm amused at the fact your studio is named 'Crappy World Films.'

The Deep Ones played at many festivals and have gotten great reviews, which I greatly appreciate, and even read really distasteful ones. I take nothing away as I enjoy looking at both reviews as long as they're well written.

We had many offers [for our film] when it came time for distribution. But we went with Brady Bowen of 123 GO because he was enthusiastic. I'm willing to take that gamble to see if they're able to make that same marketing magic that the films we discussed did—at least a proper attempt instead of just dumping it out on Amazon Prime or trying to get a Netflix deal.

AU: Was it difficult to not make your story like *Shadows over Innsmouth*?

I told the crew this film is essentially *Shadow over Innsmouth* meets *Rosemary's Baby*. Replicate the look [of the latter] in camera to give it that claustrophobic symmetry throughout, and we're good.

AU: The medical doctor in this film was hilarious. Did you have the idea of making that character transgender in the beginning?

Whether it's a trans or a transvestite or an alien that's trying to be human, that was how I spun this character. I'm a huge Bea Arthur fan and so that character was a cross between her and Hillary Clinton. Timothy Muskatell, who played this character, threw in a little Monty Python. We were worried he was going too far, but I think it

added a certain, not necessarily straight humour.

AU: Which is scarier, the cults or the monsters, in the world of H.P. Lovecraft?

I would say the Cultists. Anyone that thinks with one mind, whether it's politics, religion or whatever, is frightening because you're not able to think on your own. If you're a hardcore Democrat or Republican—or a Christian arguing with someone else—you're not able to fully see the other sides of someone's beliefs like a Buddhist could.

A cult often operates with one mind. I would be more afraid of the cult—crew and cast included [laughs].

AU: What do you think the payoff is with making Lovecraft-style films because typically the hero dies or goes insane?

You got to show something big, whether it be tentacles or the glowing eyes of Dagon. I enjoy seeing those. *The Colour Out of Space* is an outstanding example. It had an energy and look. Richard Stanley's direction was amazing. I enjoy his works and for various films and other directors

take on Howard's stuff and try to make it their own.

Stuart Gordon made amazing Lovecraft stuff and they're a great combination of not only the gore but also quirky humor. You don't normally associate humor with Lovecraft, but his films brought that element in and it definitely inspired me to throw in a little humor into my works as well.

AU: What are you making next?

If *The Deep Ones* do very well in the secondary markets, it'll lead to the sequel, which is ready to go [into production]. It's called *H.P. Lovecraft's The Old Ones*, which is sort of Lovecraft's *The Beyond* meets *Phantasm II*. We go from the ocean to the desert, to alternate dimensions. It was a blast to write. Hopefully it comes together.

In the meantime, I'm shooting a film called *Night Caller* with Steve Railsback, Susan Priver, Bai Ling, Robert Miano, Lew Temple, Kelli Maroney and Silvia Spross. We hope to have it done by June this year for film festivals.

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Absolute Album Reviews

Crackwhore - Let This Be A Lesson...



Infamous grindcore band Crackwhore just released their first album in 16 years. This record pulls no punches. Instead they push them into your face with extreme blunt force. The songs on this record are like 13 thugs lined up to have some cruel good times, as you're tied to a chair in some damp dungeon underneath a garage in the bad part of a shithole town. Right from the get-go they come out with a violent flurry and they just keep rolling with those punches. It is relentless and you can feel it. You can taste your blood and smell their breath. It's not pretty or romantic at all. With 13 tracks, the album clocks in at just under 30 minutes. So you know it gets right to the point with a quick order. There aren't a lot of nice things covered in this release, but new vocalist "Regurgitator" is more than up to the task. He boils with frantic and chaotic ramblings of murder, assault and all things callous. One thing that stands out for me is that Crackwhore have

expanded beyond the pure harsh grindcore they are known for. Dare I say this record has some groove to it? I hear lots of thrash influence, as well. But make no mistake, for all you grind guzzling brutalcoholics out there, listening to this record will keep a safe place for you in hell when Crackwhore takes your life.

- Heath Fenton

Impure Injection - Gore in the North EP Brutal Reign Productions



The "New Era of Chinese Extreme Bands" is what I christened the pack of brutal-minded musicians coming out of China within the last ten years. The small but rabid community features artists like Rectal Wench, Globularcyst, Sexy Oldguys and Impure Injection. From Zibo, Shandong province, talented grinder Gore Geng has created a project which is as relentless as an acid splash on bare skin. Influenced by bands ranging from Repulsion to Exhumed, Impure Injection is

sometimes a one-man project live, while he sometimes has a few other maniacs helping his cause. In 2019, Impure Injection's *Genetically Modified Utopia* album was a ferocious piece of what was to come from the band.

The *Gore in the North* EP is a step forward for the band - four tracks of unrelenting grind which are more discomforting than a vaccination side effect. Compared to *Utopia*, the production sounds crisper and the songs ultimately sound meaner. A discomforting electronic intro paves way for "Immersive Apotheosizing Experience", which feels like being caught in a swirling tornado of guts and gore. "Rectal Wench Has No Mandarin Name" name drops the goregrind band. I imagine if their name was translated into Mandarin, the band's profile would be deleted off of some Chinese websites. Here, the vocals of Geng are like bayonets at one point and bricks thrown at your head at another. "Gore in the North" finishes off the EP, which contains some gang chants of the title before the start-stop riffs and pissed off snake vocals take over. And then, like a good quickie, it's all over with.

If you're in China and are into grind, this is a band to see. Hopefully the world will come to know some of the bands in this "New Era" as they play shows abroad in the upcoming years. I'm looking at you, Obscene Extreme Festival.

-Ryan Dyer

Bare Bones - Dead Rights Circle A Studio



There have been a few bands and albums conceived and born during this pandemic. Dead Rights (Kyle Burnett / Ryan Ashby/ Stu Dobell) have self-released their debut EP "Bare Bones" on Spotify, Apple Music and Bandcamp. These four tracks drill into your earbuds at just over 11 minutes, but this record is no drive by. From deciding the band's name to the message in the songs, these hardworking guys want to be taken seriously straight out of the gate.

Front man and main lyricist Kyle (Vic City Rejects) wanted to inject something deeper than party songs into this release. Having said that, "Drinking for Three" is a shout out to lone drinkers in a band paid with drink tickets. (Or as Kyle puts it, "just a punk song about being a scumbag.")

"Without a Doubt" is an outstanding track speaking to drug abuse up close and finding love in something ugly. "Invisible Ink" paints an apocalyptic WW 3 picture and "Follow Me Down" looks at complexity in relationships with musicians. 90s punk flavored, you will taste influences from Rancid, Anti-Flag and Blink 182 in these songs. This EP is a treat best served loud. It will translate well live, and the band is counting the days. Ambitious tour plans include overseas destinations. There's a full release worth of songs in the bunker; but for now, check out "Bare Bones." Worth a listen.

- John Carlow

Returned to Life - Altered Dead Momento-mori.es

Death Metal anyone? With so much to choose from on this planet today I choose Altered Dead. I was in some sweatbox years back, feeling out of place because of my age until Altered Dead took to the stage, then I immediately didn't care. This band consists of only two humans and the sound they generate literally drives you into the ground. It's just fucking great. I don't know where to start,



all these songs have epic moments of AAAAAhhhhrrrggg. Guitar riffs and drum beats that leave you not wanting a brake pedal for this death train. The opening song "Mental Suicide" eases you back into the seat then quickly puts you right through the seat. The one song that gets me good is "Thrawing in Agony," the riffs and the drums whip you in all directions and you feel the need to ball up your fist and shake it. "Rotting Outwards" takes you into a strut but quickly leaves you with your mouth open. The song "Of the Oppressed" ends then it sounds like the subway wheel is seized on the track for a good minute. A familiar hum starts then the riff for "Into the Crypts of Rays" starts and you are listening to one of the top 10 metal songs ever created. Yes, Altered Dead leave you in the Frost.

-ricky jak

One Way Streets - The Choice Few Longshot Music

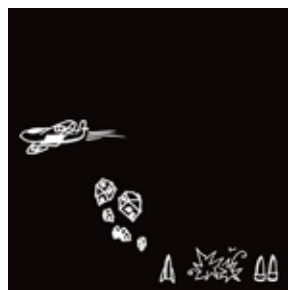


Oi music originated in England and spread all over the world in small pockets. I had a few oi records in the early 80s and enjoyed them enough to shave my head and wear doc martin boots for a brief time. To my knowledge Victoria has never had an oi band. Maybe the Resistance in 1984 had an oi flavor but sounded more punk. Now here I am in 2021, 30 years later and I am listening to this record by an oi band called The Choice Few from Victoria B.C. Canada. They have all the elements of the 1981 oi I loved so much. They are proof that oi music is still alive

and well in the basements, garages and bars. The Choice Few are not the usual blasting punch in the face with a man yelling lyrics that sound like they are in Klingon. The Choice Few are a melodic danceable oi music that even my 50 year old wife didn't mind. I even hear a touch of mod music with a band like The Jam's sound in The Choice Few. Their lyrics are observations of life, drinking and the streets. Oi is still alive, and The Choice Few proves it. Hunt this gem down even if you have never heard of oi, you will be surprised.

-ricky jak

Shadow of Sevens - Tremblers of Sevens Noiseagonymayhem Records



I can't say enough about this band. I have seen them live many times and they are a blast of heavy folk. They border on stoner with a taste of Arabic, Greek, Turkish, and Swiss... But they are heavy. If that intro doesn't intrigue you get back into the mainstream and stop reading. During lockdown last year this record slipped through the wickets in my garden fence and into my hands. It was placed onto my turntable and was turned up just about to 10. It starts with a hard driving riff that is actually inspired by a Jewish bride's waltz. This is just a great album. It sounds a little like Danzig on vocals, the guitars are in overdrive and the drummer is administering beats that are all over yet in time. Did I say this is a great album? It's not a wreck the house type of record but if you like kitchen music that needs to be turned up this is the record. I really shouldn't be the one writing a review on this cultural sounding masterpiece but I fear if it is not exposed it will slip away into a fiord. There were only 200 pressed, get one!

-ricky jak

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ANTI-FLAG	YOUTH BRIGADE	THE ENGLISH BEAT
THE QUEERS	THE BRONX	RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS
ROY ELLIS	THE AGGROLITES	THE SCHIZOPHONICS
PEARS	GOOD RIDDANCE	BISHOPS GREEN
BAD COP/BAD COP	PLAGUE VENDOR	BRIDGE CITY SINNERS
SEIZED UP	FIELD DAY	THE LAST GANG
THE LINECUTTERS	URETHANE	HOLY FEVER
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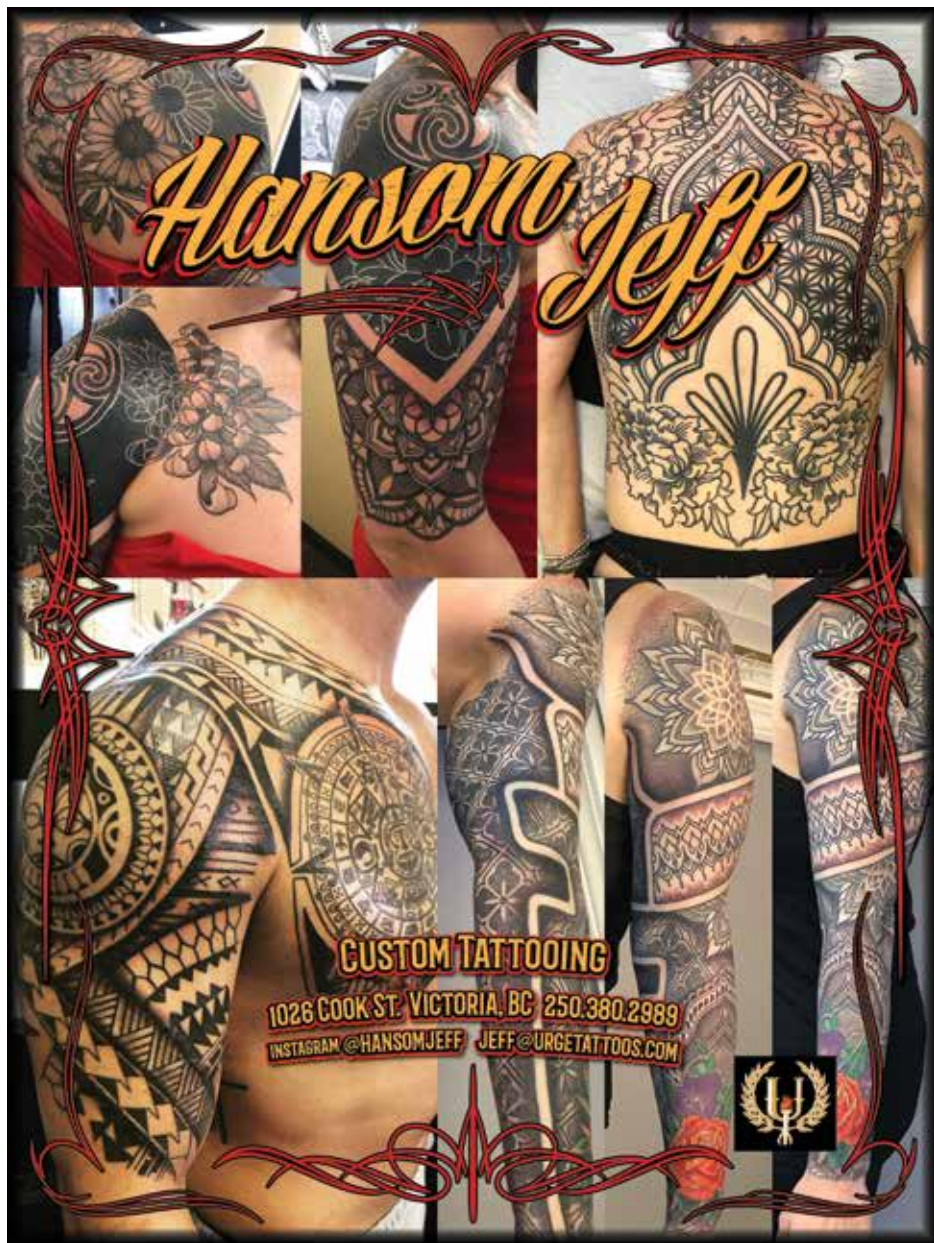
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Absolute Live Reviews

ONE OF US STAR CHASERS.

THE QUERY (TIANJIN)
IMPRISON HEART (LIJIAN)
HIGH THRONE (LIJIAN)
SEXY OLDGUYS (SHANDONG)
KNIVESRAIN (SHANDONG)
ARTEMIS (SHANDONG)

3/20

One of Us - Star Chasers
March 20, 2021, 20 Years Live House, Tianjin China

It was a night to showcase young heavy talent in China - as brought to you by the team who produces one of the biggest core-infused festivals in China, One of Us.

Now in its fourth year, this one-off, entitled Star Chasers, was meant to test the waters for which band might be added to the festival later in the year. The venue was the 20 Years Live House, which is a long train ride into the western area of Tianjin - not exactly within the inner city. I wouldn't come here every day for a show, but for a special

occasion like this, it was necessary. Six bands would perform tonight - each being fairly new to the scene. While a few were local, others came from Beijing, Chengdu, Jinan and Shandong. Up first were Beijing's Artemis. They were notably the only band of the night to have a female member, and were the lightest of the bunch. Their use of clean, ballad like vocals made the band stand out as one which may actually rise above this metal scene and into the mainstream.

Imprison Heart made the trip from Jinan to play this festival and were warmly greeted by the packed house. The members are a fusion of styles - looking like a mixed bag of sub-cultures. Together, they create a formidable form of metalcore which was certainly suitable for this type of festival.

Knivesrain made the long trip from Chengdu to play the festival and were the most interesting band of the night for me - their sound is rooted in deathcore but borrows a lot of electronic elements. If those knives were a storm of lightsabers,



you'd get a more fitting depiction of their sound.

Local rising starts Iron Throne were up next. In the past six months, they have shed many of their folk metal trappings for a brutal deathcore sound. A new logo, new members and a new mean streak have proved wonders for the band, who put on a boot stomping set which was until that point, the heaviest of the night.

Another local act who did play the One of Us festival last year, The Query, performed next. They have a sizable fan base within Tianjin, and play an impassioned form of metalcore which had the attendees raising their hands and singing along with pride.

The post-modern humor of Shandong's Sexy Oldguys is beginning to make big waves in the underground grind scene of China. When I saw them before, they were two sexy guys with a drum machine. Now, they were three sexy guys (one wearing a lot of makeup) with a real beat to back the facetious brutality that only a few young dudes who call themselves old can bring.

- Ryan Dyer



Absolute Film Reviews

Clapboard Jungle

The story on Justin McConnell's attempt to make his aptly titled *Lifechanger* gives his documentary *Clapboard Jungle*, now out on home video, a structure to wrap around. We see him talk about his work developed from concept to fully realized movie and towards home video. This work mostly focuses on folks who are involved in making horror films as it's one of the easiest types of indie movie to make. The slasher genre is rife with them and to come up with a story is easy to develop, even for newcomers on a budget!

The process to develop from spec is even more complicated in the world of Hollywood. Indies are unique because you are in control. The wealth of information provided in this work will help newcomers. In this home video release which contains plenty of expanded interview content, the takeaways are many. I'm impressed at everything Richard Stanley (*Colour out of Space*), Tom Holland (*Child's Play*) and Sam Firstenberg (*Ninja 3: the Domination*) had to say, and there's many more names who talk about how to make it in this industry. But it still boils down to one key thing: networking and having a go-to attitude!

Though being committed can sometimes mean taking formal classes; through workshops in writing and the arts, you learn how to take constructive criticism. I've personally discovered painting, photography and videography essentially uses the same type of skill set needed for understanding visual composition. Once they become second-nature, anyone can start.

-Ed Sum



crew. I'm a sucker for folk horror—especially if the writer/creators make the creature (or person in this case) a believable figure.

When a deadly virus has nearly destroyed the world, the only survivors are those who have fled to the woods and away from civilization to avoid being infected. Although we know nothing about the cities, the woods are alive with something else—a terror from the past who's become one with the forest. Parnag Fegg practised necromancy and alchemy, always a good sign for the villain of the week. But her story is lost when there's also a modern killer who loves dressing his victims up in white and taking photographs.

Had the story been more about one than the other, I'd be sold. Zach is a squatter whom scientist, Martin Lowery, befriends while in the forest. He's trying to find his ex, Doctor Olivia Wendle. She's studying the root systems of this ecosystem to learn how to create massive crops in not so versatile lands.

This forest in Bristol is not as safe as everyone thinks. Zach warns his new friend about the night stalkers, but little does anyone know, including Wendle, that the drugs they're finding have powerful hallucinogenic properties. When considering how slow the pacing is, I fast forwarded through this film to see how everything ends. Anyone who has problems with strobe lights are advised not to see this film.

In the end, I wished this movie had more of a Lovecraftian element to keep me engaged. The tale was begging for some fungi from outer space to land and to deal with these people which had no business being in these woods. I'm sure the witch Fegg would approve.

-Ed Sum



In the Earth

I feel that any independent horror movie made during 2020 will have the distinction of being a "Pandemic" film. Ben Wheatley's *In the Earth* is on VOD platforms, and it was one definitely made with a small budget and with a limited

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THEY ALL DIED SCREAMING



Kristopher Triana
Blood Bound Books
October 26, 2020

What a dark little gem this one is. There's a note at the end of the novel stating that Triana finished the rough draft in February 2020, just before COVID hit.

The novel is divided into two stories that eventually come together. One story is centered on a virus that turns into a pandemic that is highly contagious. When you catch the virus, your eyes start to leak pus, your skin becomes jaundiced, and you start screaming till you die. Over the course of the novel, the infected mutate from screaming maniacs that are intent on killing themselves, to maniacs that are driven to kill everybody that isn't one of them.

The second story in the novel is centered around a father and his "son" that live on a pig farm, and distribute "veal" to nearby markets. There's obviously a lot more going on in this second story, but I would rather let you find out what is truly going on.

There's a ton of disturbing material in this novel. It's heavy in gore, and there are scenes that will haunt you for a while. However, one of the things that I find truly interesting, considering that the rough draft for the novel was completed before our world fell apart, is that Triana has woven a ton of social commentary into the story lines that have really only become major points over the past 8 months.

This is the second novel of Triana's that I've read, the first being Full Brutal which I also highly recommend, but I enjoyed this so much that it definitely won't be the last.

Michael Cushing

2021
SPLATTERPUNK
AWARDS
NOMINEE
BEST NOVEL

WELCOME TO THE SPLATTER CLUB



**K. Trap Jones (Editor),
Nikki Noir, John Mc-
Nee, K.J. Moore, Airika
Sneve, Robert Essig, CM
Saunders, Brian Asman,
Chandler Morrison, Josh-
ua Rex, Paul Standsfield,
Matthew Weber, Patric**

Winters, Matthew Vaughn

Blood Bound Books
August 12th 2020

One thing that is vexatious about reading anthologies is there is normally a handful of duds you have to scrape through, but this was NOT the case with the 13 tales in *Welcome to the Splatter Club*... and a hearty welcome you receive! The anthology kicks off with a wild night in John McNee's 'Splatter Party' - the title says it all, Nikki Noir's erotic phantasm 'Grinder' (one of my favorites in the whole collection) and the clever 'I Hang My Hat and There's No Blood' by Robert Essig. It keeps smashing through... filled to the brim with the strangest stuff out there including; therapy penguins brought to you buy one of our favourite indie authors, Brian Asman, cheese, boardroom CEOs, teenage boys becoming men, Thailand vacations and so much more to deliver the WTF moments Splatterpunk fans come to know and love. Not just a stupefied gore-fest for the extreme, but real, notable, quality stories for true horror fans. Just the beginning for this anthology, I'm sure BBB will carry the tradition onward considering this is numbered #1. There is no where to go but up after this one.

Demonika

CHEW ON THIS! ANTHOLOGY



**Robert Essig, Robert
Bose, Tonia Brown,
Shenoa Carroll-Bradd,
Victorya Chase, Sarah
Johnson, K. Trap Jones,
Vivian Kasley, Ronald
Kelly, Chad Lutzke, John
McNee, S.C. Mendes,**

Nikki Noir, Armand Rosamilia, Mark C.

2021
SPLATTERPUNK
AWARDS
NOMINEE
BEST ANTHOLOGY

**Scioneaux, Chad Stroup, Sylvia Anne
Telfer, Kristopher Triana**
Blood Bound Books
December 31st 2020

This is a collection of horror stories that center around food. There is a lot of dark humor in this anthology. I found myself laughing out loud and shaking my head quite often reading this one. Two stories really stood out for me here. "Meat or be Meaten," by Robert Bose and Sarah L Johnson, to start. Words will not do me justice in trying to describe this one. It's one of the most vile and absurd stories I've ever read. The other was "A Woman's Work," by Tonia Brown. Dead babies and a true WTF moment that made me put the book down for a bit so I could actually process what I just read.

Michael Cushing

CRASH CODE ANTHOLOGY



**by Quinn Parker
(Editor), Kristopher
Triana, Dean H. Wild,
K. Trap Jones, Aaron
Thomas Milstead,
Daniel I. Russell, T. Fox
Dunham, Sean Eads &
Josh Viola, KJ Moore,**

**Luciano Marano, Alex Franco, Nathan
Batchelor, Eric Lewis, Odin Oxthorn,
David Shultz, Christopher Wilson, John
Pedersen, Matt Thompson, Damascus
Mincemeyer, Patrick Meegan, Mela-
nie Rees, Rachel Nussbaum, Addison
Smith, Hannah Trusty, Morgan Chal-
fant, Sebastian Hetman, Neil Hudson**
Blood Bound Books
January 7th 2020

Another killer anthology from the folks over at Blood Bound Books. Not one we might expect though; this one keeps a theme of cyberpunk horror with 27 stories that will creep you to the core, and the shiver running down your spine is brought to you by technology. That's right... deep-fake consternation, loss of our on-line privacy, all sorts of tales that are not too far off to be legit. Is your phone in your pocket right now? This book covers everything from AI sex dolls and artificial limbs to self-driving cars, drugs and more.

This was a pretty substantial collection, a few I could have skipped that didn't do it for me, but for the most part I was drawn in because it's such a cool subject for a horror collection as we normally see sci-fi books go down this road. Stories that really stood out amongst the crowd were 'A Silent Auction' by Aaron Thomas Milstead, a really unique concept I'd not read about before, 'Mr. Companion,' another winner by Alex Franco about a futuristic sex doll, also 'First to Fight,' 'Respawn Inc,' and 'Grinder' were some others I really enjoyed. All in all, an excellent collection with a really unique theme. After a while you've seen them all done and done over again, but this one was really refreshing... we already know now creepy technology can be, so let's just let the masters REALLY fuck us up with this one!

Demonika

BLACK PLANET (#1 - 4)



Nikki Noir

Blood Bound Books
November 27th 2020

Body Horror, Murder, Black Goo. *Black Planet* by Nikki Noir is such a weird paranormal, occultish tale that is divided into four seasons (sections) and ends

on a preface for the next season we hope Blood Bound Books gets on quickly. Eldritch, thriller, erotica, bizzare... bringing to mind comparisons to *Twin Peaks*, *True Detective*, or maybe an adult version of *Stranger Things*? Set in a small town with a full cast of personalities we have stories that interlace and unfold the enigma of this black glue/goop/goo that originates from the woods which perverts people's minds and brings to light all sorts of inscrutableness. Plus add in trying to escape town, sex cams, the dark web, all painted with vivid imaginative scenes guided by Noir. This truly special piece of literature is not for the faint of heart. Innocent victims, gore, murder, sex and death... what else do horror fans need? Maybe owls who aren't really owls? Ok, this has those, too. If you are into series works, this one is certainly to not disappoint, especially for those of us with already vivid imaginations.

Hatchetface

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GLOBAL STREET ART



Global Street Art

Interview with artist The Alkomist/Gregory Metcalfe

By Claude Montreuil

Absolute Underground: Where are you from and what is your name?

GM: I'm from Leeds, a city in the north of The UK(England). My name is The Alkomist/Gregory Metcalfe.

AU: How did you get started and involved with graffiti and street art?

GM: Graffiti and street and all started for me in 2012, I was diagnosed with cancer but it had a really positive effect on my life. It made me quit drugs which I had been addicted to for a very long time... It gave me a wake up call as I knew I had a new fight on my hands and I felt I could beat cancer if I started a new life



drug free and I did, it's been just over 10 years now since I stopped using addictive prescription and street drugs and it's been really amazing, building a new life as artist has been so much fun... I was influenced to do street art

due to a message a friend told me just before he died from the same cancer I was recovering from, he told me to watch a Canadian story on Youtube called "Run From The Cure" by Rick Simpson, I watched it and couldn't believe it, I was so angry this cannabis based medication was not available here in the UK and other countries... I think Rick Simpson Oil (made from cannabis) can cure some cancers and help with other medical conditions.

AU: Who influenced you the most in the graffiti world?

GM: My friend who died from cancer (the weed guy), he influenced me the most to do street art. I wanted to tell the whole world

about cannabis oil for medical uses and felt I could share his message in a creative way if I painted in public places.

AU: What is the definition of a true Anarchist?

GM: The definition of an Anarchist is a person who is skeptical of authority and wants to see the abolition of the State, which Anarchists say is unnecessary and harmful.

AU: What pisses you off the most about art and music now?

GM: The thing that piss me of the most in music and arts now is nothing really, if you make it to be a successful artist you deserve some respect.

AU: What music do you listen to when creating your art?

GM: When I'm making art I love to listen to electronic music and some hip-hop but will give anything a go, even punk from my Canadian buddies!



AU: What are the feelings you want to express in your creativity?

GM: The feelings I want to express in my creativity are freedom, rebellion and some humour.

AU: I read in the news feeds in England you were involved with Banksy. Can you tell me more about how it happened and what type of person Banksy is?

GM: Some news feeds in England might say I've been connected to Banksy, however I only sprayed one of his Rats writing FREEDOM and told the local news

it might be a real Banksy, after they published the article I admitted it was me and showed it to the judge in court. I was in trouble for lots of street art and graffiti, the judge found it quite funny and gave me a smaller fine

for being honest, THANKS BANKSY!

AU: Do you think you will ever come to Canada to visit us and created some impact with your art?

GM: I do hope I can come to Canada one day to meet my creative friends there and maybe do some collaborations.

AU: Tell us more about you. What motivates

you to keep doing street art after being arrested many times for your passion. And how can people contact you to buy your art?

GM: What kept me going the most through many times being arrested for street art was my desire to learn how a street artist can become a legal



artist and fully respected in a community, while still painting outside like murals etc. Obviously this type of work I mean is paid for and the jobs are often very large. I studied art enterprise for around a year and that was really interesting. I need to sell my work now and am looking at an arts council grant to fund a project, it will be my first ever Solo Visual Art Show and exhibition. Let's hope I can get a successful application made. People can email me for commissions I'm happy to do professional quality work shipped to Canada, that would be great.

(theresonly1gregsta@yahoo.co.uk) FB: Gregory Metcalfe/Alkomist.

AU: What do you do to have fun in England?

GM: To have fun I love to do street art, I find it amazing how big an image you can make in just a short time, with just a few spray cans. In like three or four minutes you can spray a pretty cool message in a really ace place, for everybody to see!

AU: I also know you were involved in the movie The Banksy Job, can you tell me more about this?

GM: Regarding *The Banksy Job* film, I was supposed to be an extra in it, but if I remember correctly I wasn't needed in the end.

AU: Final Words?

GM: Thanks for taking the time to reach out to The Alkomist in England. It was great finding out the Canada crew do it.

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COMIC-GEDDON

The Outerverse of Baltimore Expands with Three Series This Year!
By Ed Sum

Masters of Comic Book Horror Mike Mignola and Chris Golden's *Baltimore* (2007) have everything I'd love to see when turning World War II into a Weird War. Anyone who reads *Joe Golem* will have a leg up in understanding all that's transpired since this world's inception, and this year has standalone releases to introduce readers to the other characters, and perhaps also get them interested in the main line of books.

Cojacaru the Skinner is one of the three releases. The other releases to come include *Imogen of the Wyrding Way* and *The Golem Walks Among Us*.

Skinner is a warrior from the times of Medieval France and died a long time ago. She's been brought back to life to deal with the Hexenkorps, a group of evil witches serving Nazi Germany and are laying siege to smaller towns. I assume the main forces are too busy with France, and the Allied Forces are nowhere to be found. The citizens have to use their own white magic to summon Cojacaru.

I think this presentation would've been better as a one-shot double-sized comic since issue one cuts the tale too quickly. The second issue continues with what's next and has the backstory I was waiting for.

This comic book series is just as good as Solomon Kane in that we're dealing with a similar theme, but a different approach to deal with period threats. Besides, who doesn't love seeing Nazis getting their just desserts since they can't find that Holy Grail?




CANADAZE

1	S	2	N	3	O	4	W	5	M	6	E	7	A	8	N	9	S	10	S	11	N	12	O	13	W	14	E	15	P
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31	I	32	R	33	I	34	E	35		36	T	37	A	38	L	39	C	40		41	S	42	E	43	V	44	E	45	N
46	R	47	I	48	N	49	K	50		51	R	52	A	53	T	54		55		56	O	57	T	58	H	59		60	K
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136	H	137	O	138	L	139	L	140	Y	141	W	142	O	143	O	144	D	145		146	W	147	O	148	R	149	S	150	T
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180	E	181	R	182	A	183	T	184	O	185		186	H	187	A	188	V	189	E	190		191	R	192	O	193	C	194	H
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